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BY CAPTAIN MAYNE REID.

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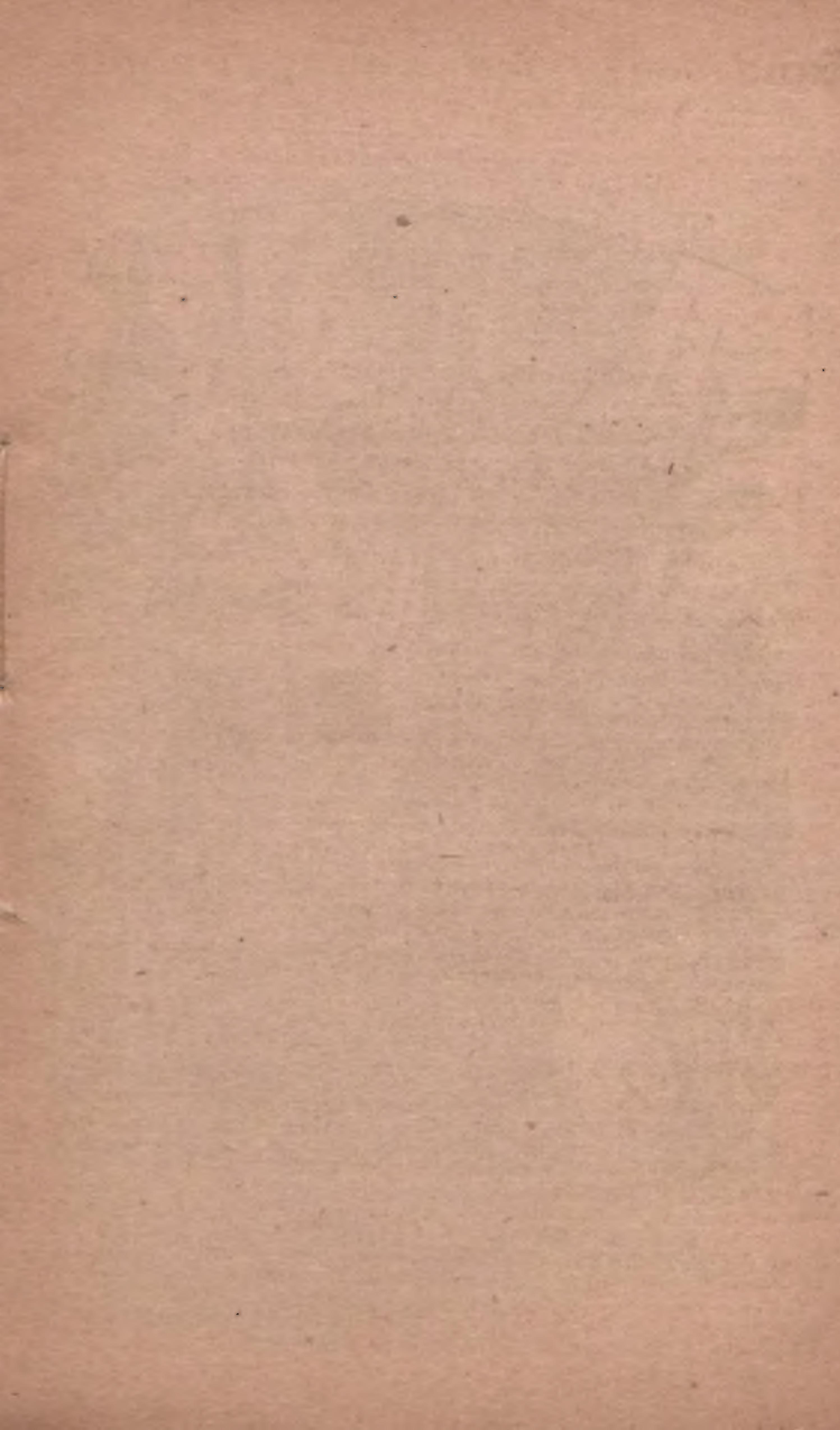
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THE  
YELLOW CHIEF.

A ROMANCE OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

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BY CAPT. MAYNE REID,

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# THE YELLOW CHIEF.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE PUNISHMENT OF THE PUMP.

"To the pump with him! and see that he has a double dose of it!"

The words were spoken in a tone of command, earnest and angry. They were addressed to the overseer of a cotton-plantation not far from Vicksburg, in the State of Mississippi, the speaker being Blount Blackadder, a youth aged eighteen, and son to Squire Blackadder, the owner of the plantation.

Who was to receive the double douche?

Near by stood a personage to whom the words evidently pointed. He was also a youth, not very different in either age or size from him who had given the order; though his tawny skin and short crisped hair bespoke him of a different race—in short, a mulatto. And the time—for it is a tale of twenty years ago—along with other attendant circumstances, proclaimed him a slave of the plantation.

And why ordered to be thus served? As a punishment, of course.

You may smile at the idea, and deem it a joke. But the "punishment of the pump" is one of the most severe that can be inflicted; far more so than either the bastinado, or castigation by the lash. A man may writhe while his back is being cored by the cow-skin; but that continuous stream of cold water, at first only refreshing, becomes after a time almost unbearable, and the victim feels as though his skull were being split open with an ax.

What had "Blue Dick"—the plantation sobriquet of the young mulatto—what had he done to deserve such chastisement?

The overseer, hesitating to inflict it, put this question to Blount Blackadder.

"That's my business, and not yours, Mr. Snively. Enough

when I say, he has deserved it ; and darn me if he don't have it. To the pump with him !"

" Your father won't be pleased about it," pursued the overseer. " When he comes home—"

" When he comes home ; that's my affair. He's not at home now, and during his absence I'm master of this plantation, I guess. I hope, sir, you'll recognize me as such."

" Oh, sartinly," grumbled the overseer.

" Well, then, I've only to tell you that the nigger's got to be punished. He's done enough to deserve it. Let that satisfy you ; and for the rest I'll be answerable to my father."

What Blue Dick had done the young planter did not condescend to explain. Nor was it his passion that rendered him reticent ; but a secret consciousness that he was himself in the wrong, and acting from motives of the meanest revenge.

They had their origin in jealousy. There was a quadroon girl upon the plantation to whose smiles Blue Dick had aspired. But they were also coveted by his young master—the master of both.

In such a rivalry the end is easily told. The honest love of Blue Dick was doomed to a harsh disappointment ; for Sylvia, the quadroon, had yielded her heart less to the dictates of natural partiality, than to the combined influence of vanity and power. It was a tale oft told in those days of the so-styled patriarchal institution—happily now at an end.

Maddened by the discovery of his sweetheart's defection, the young mulatto could not restrain himself from recrimination. A collision had occurred between him and his master's son. There had been words and threatened blows, quickly succeeded by the scene we are describing.

Mr. Snively was not the man to hold out long against the threats of authority. His place was too precious to be risked by an act of idle chivalry. What to him was the punishment of a slave : a ceremony at which he was accustomed to assist almost every day of his life ? Besides, he had no particular liking for Blue Dick, who was regarded by him as a " sassy fellow." Assured against blame from Squire Blackadder, he was only too ready to cause execution of the order. He proceeded to do so.

The scene was transpiring in an open courtyard to the rear

of the "big house," adjoining also to the stables. On one side stood the pump, a tall obelisk of oak, with its massive arm of iron, and spout five feet above the level of the pavement. Underneath traversed a trough, the hollowed trunk of a tree, designed for the watering of the horses.

In the hot summer sun of the Mississippi valley it should have been a sight to give gladness to the eye. Not so with the slaves on Squire Blackadder's plantation. To them it was more suggestive of sadness and fear; and they were accustomed to regard it with the same feelings as one who looks upon a gallows, or a guillotine. More than half their number had, one time or another, sat under that spout till its chilly jet seemed like a sharp spear piercing their wool-covered crania.

The punishment of the pump was too frequent on Squire Blackadder's plantation to need minute directions as to the mode of administering it. Mr. Snively had only to repeat the order received, to some half-dozen stalwart slaves, who stood around ready to execute it. The more ready, that Blue Dick was now to be the victim; for, even with these, the mulatto youth was far from being a favorite. Full of conceit on account of his clearer skin, he had always shown himself too proud to associate with them, and was thus deprived of their sympathies. It was his first punishment, too; for, although he had often before offended in a different way, Squire Blackadder had refrained from chastising him.

It was thought strange by all, though none knew the reason; and this immunity of which he had been accustomed to boast, rendered his now threatened punishment a thing for his fellow slaves to rejoice at.

They who were ordered to administer it, went about their work with a will. At a sign from the overseer, Blue Dick was seized by two of the field hands, and dragged up to the pump. With cords procured from the adjacent stable, he was lashed to the trough in such a position that his crown came directly under the spout, eighteen inches below it. By stays stretching right and left, his head was so confined that he could not turn it an inch one way or the other. To have attempted moving it, would have been to tighten the noose, by which the rope was rove around his neck.

"Now, give him his shower-bath!" vociferated young

Blackadder to the huge negro who stood by the handle of the pump.

The man, a savage-looking monster, who had himself more than once been submitted to a similar ducking, obeyed the order with a gleeful grin. The iron lever, rattling harsh upon its pivot, moved rapidly up and down; the translucent jet shot forth from the spout, and fell plashing upon the skull beneath.

The bystanders laughed, and to the victim it would yet have been only pleasant play; but among those who were jeering him was Sylvia the quadroon! All were abroad—both the denizens of the negro quarter, and the domestics of the house—spectators of his suffering and his shame.

Even Clara Blackadder, the sister of his tyrant torturer—a young lady of about twenty summers, with all the seeming graces of an angel—stood on the back porch contemplating the scene with as much indifference as if, from the box of a theater, she had been looking upon some mere spectacle of the stage!

If she felt interest in it, it arose from no sympathy with the sufferer.

On the face of her brother was an expression of interest vivid and pronounced. His features bespoke joy—the joy of a malignant soul indulging in revenge.

It was a sad picture, that presented by these two young men—the one exulting in despotic power, the other suffering torture through its exercise. It was but the old and oft-repeated tableau of master and slave.

And yet they were strangely alike, both in form and feature. With the ocherous tint extracted from his skin, and the curl combed out of his hair, Blue Dick might have passed for a brother of Blount Blackadder. He would have been a little better looking, and certainly showing a countenance of less sinister cast.

Perhaps not at that moment; for as the agony of physical pain became added to the mental anguish he was enduring, his features assumed an expression truly diabolical. Even the jet of water, spreading like a vail over them, did not hide from the spectators the fiend-like glance with which he regarded his oppressor. Through the diaphanous sheet they

could see white lips tightly compressed against whiter teeth, that grinned defiance and vengeance, as his eyes rested on Sylvia. He uttered no groan; neither did he stir for a moment, though the torture he was enduring caused him to tremble within his ropes, at the risk of their snapping him.

There were few present who did not know that he was suffering extreme pain—so many of them from a knowledge of it. And it was only when one of these, smitten by vivid recollection, vented it in mirthsome slight words of exostution, that the punishment was suspended.

"He's had enough, I reckon?" said Snively, turning interrogatively toward the young planter.

"No, ban him! not half enough," was the reply; "you haven't given him the double. But never mind! It'll do for the present. Next time he offends in like manner, he shall be pumped upon 'till his thick skull splits like a cedar rail!"

Saying this, Blount Blackadder turned carelessly upon his horse, and went off to join his sister in the porch—leaving the overseer to reverse the sufferer at his discretion.

The iron handle discontinued its harsh grating; the crimson rain ceased to pour; and Blue Dick, disengaged from his corse, was carried fainting to the stable.

But he was never again subjected to the punishment of the pump. The young planter did not have a chance to carry out his threat. Three days after, Blue Dick disappeared from the plantation. And on the morning of that day, almost simultaneously with his disappearance, was found the body of the girl—*a girl* Sylvia, at the bottom of the peach orchard, her head split open to the chin!

It had been done by the blade of a wood-tax. There was no mystery about the matter—no speculation as to the author of the deed. The antecedent circumstances pointed directly to Blue Dick; and he was at once sought for.

So that tax, I mean a fowl. As soon as the hue-and-cry had gone round, the surrounding settlers, planters as well as poor and unprincipled, took up the chase, and into their saddle. The hounds also were put upon Blue Dick's track; but spite their keen scent for game, and the energetic urging of their owners, they never set sang in the flesh of the madutto murderer.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE BLACKADDERS.

In the three preceding chapters the condition of slavery, taken as a part of the United States where it is to be found, was so bad in the tract region lying along the lower Mississippi, known as the "Coast." More especially was this true of the State of Mississippi itself. In the older territories, east of the Alleghany range, the "institution" was tempered with a touch of benevolence; and the same might be said of Kentucky and Tennessee. Even in parts of Louisiana the mild, indulgent hand of the Creole had a softening influence on the condition of the slave. But it was different on the great cotton and tobacco plantations of the Mississippi, as also portions of the Louisiana coast; many of whose owners were only half-breed Indians, and where the management of the negro was left entirely to the overseer—an irresponsible, and, in many cases, a very taskmaster. And among the owners themselves was a large number—the majority in fact—not born upon the soil, but emigrants from all countries, who had gone thither, either with broken fortunes, and not unfrequently characters as well.

By these men the slave was only looked upon as so much a live-stock; and it was not a question either of his happiness or welfare, but the work to be got out of him.

It would be a mistake to say that Mississippian planters were all of this class; as it would be also erroneous to suppose that Southern masters in general were less humane than other men. There is no denying them a certain generosity of character; and many among them were philanthropists of the first class. It was the institution itself that caused them; and, brought up under its influence, they thought and acted wretchedly; but not worse, I fear, than you or I would have done had we been living under the same laws.

Unfortunately, unkind men were exceptions among planters of the lower Mississippi; and so bad was the reputation of this section of the South, that to have transacted a Virginia

negro—or even one of Kentucky or Tennessee—with sale or expulsion either, was sufficient at any time to make him contented with his task!

The word "coast" was the bogey of negro boyhood, and the terror of his manhood.

Prairie Blackadder, originally from the State of Delaware, was among the men who had contributed to this evil reputation. He had migrated to Mississippi at an early period of his life, making a purchase of some cheap land on a tract owned by the Choctaws. A poor man at the period of his migration, he had never risen to a high rank among the planter aristocracy of the State. But just for this reason did he always think of what appeared, to a mind like his, the real picture of the order—a despotic bearing toward the subservient negro whose evil star had guided them into his hands. In the case of many of them, their own evil master had something to do in conflicting them thither; for Prairie Blackadder was accustomed to buy his negroes cheap, and his "sack" was regarded as one of the worst, in the regard of country in which his plantation was "located." Despite his bad repute, however, there was work in them; and no man may better than Squite Blackadder how to take it out. If the absence of day was not sufficient to keep them to their tasks, there was a lash to hinder them from lagging; he'd ever ready in the hands of a man who had no disposition to spare it. This was Saively, the overseer, who, like the master himself, haled from Delaware State.

Upon the Black-Adder plantation was punishment enough, and of every kind known to the skin of the negro. At last, some years ago, a milletion—of the miller type—extended to the negro's skin. If Pompey or Sip tried to escape work by breaking a tooth, the tooth was instantly extracted, though but the slightest sign of decay might be detected in the "ivory!"

Under such rigid discipline, the Blackadder plantation should have thrived, and its owner become a wealthy man. No such result would have come so, but for an accident—the master's death, in spilling the pants, kept him comparatively poor.

The "scorpion pipe" was the Squite's own and only see-

Blount, who had grown up what is termed a wild fellow. He was not only wild, but wicked; and what, perhaps, grieved his father far more, he had of late years become ruinously expensive. He kept low company, preferring the "white trash"; fought cocks, and played "poker" with them in the woods; and, in a patronizing way, attended all the "canary-puffings" and "blanket trampings" for ten miles around.

The squire could not be otherwise than indulgent to a youth of such tastes, who was his only son and heir. In boyhood's days he had done the same himself. For this reason his purse-strings, held tight against all others, were loosened to his hopeful son Blount, even to aiding him in his evil courses. He was less generous to his daughter Clara, a girl gifted with great beauty, as also endowed with many of those moral graces so becoming to woman. True, it was she who had stood in the porch while Blue Dick was undergoing the punishment of the pump. And it is true, also, that she exhibited but slight sympathy with the sufferer. Still was there something to palliate this apparent hardness of heart: she was not fully aware of the terrible pain that was being inflicted; and it was her father's fault, not hers, that she was accustomed to witness such scenes weekly, almost daily. Under other tutelage, Clara Blackadder might have grown up a young lady, good as she was graceful: and under other circumstances been happier than she was on the day she was seen to such disadvantage.

That, at this time, a cloud overshadowed her fate, was evident from that overshadowing her face; for, on looking upon it, no one could mistake its expression to be other than sadness.

The cause was simple, as it is not uncommon. The lover of her choice was not the choice of her father. A youth, poor in purse, but rich in almost every other quality to make man esteemed—of handsome person, and mind adorned with rare cultivation—a stranger in the land—in short, a young Irishman, who had strayed into Mississippi, nobody knew wherefore or when. Such was he who had won the friendship of Clara Blackadder, as the enmity both of her brother and father.

In heart accepted by her—though her lips clung yet

declare it—he was rejected by them, in words scornful, almost insulting.

They were sufficient to drive him away from the State; for the girl, constrained by parental authority, had not spoken plain enough to retain him. And he went, as he had come, no one knew whither; and perhaps only Clara Blackadder cared.

As she stood in the porch, she was thinking more of him than the punishment that was being inflicted on Blue Dick; and not even on the day after, when her maid Cynthia was discovered dead under the trees, did the dread spectacle drive from her thoughts the remembrance of a man lodged there for life!

As the overseer had predicted, Squire Blackadder, on his return home, was angry at the chastisement that had been inflicted on Blue Dick, and horrified on hearing of the tragedy that succeeded it.

The sins of his own earlier life seemed rising in retribution against him!

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## CHAPTER III.

### A CHANGED PLANTATION.

We pass over a period of five years succeeding the scene recorded.

During this time there was but little change on the plantation of Squire Blackadder; either in the dwellers on the estate or the administration of its affairs. Neither castigation by the cow-kin, nor the punishment of the pump, was discontinued. Both were frequent and severe as ever; and whatever of work could by such means be extracted from human muscles, was taken out of the unhappy slaves, who called Mr. Suively their "over-ma." Without, the plantation did not prosper. But, still plunging yet deeper into dissipation, drained it of every dollar of its profits, intranching even on the standard value of the estate. The number of its lands had become reduced, till there was scarce enough for its cultivation;

and despite the constant cracking of Mr. Safford's whip, weeds began to show themselves in the cotton fields, and to decay around the "gin-house."

At the end of these five years, however, came a change, complete as it was cheerful.

The buildings underwent repair, "big house" as well as out-offices; while the crops, once more carefully cultivated, presented a flourishing appearance. In the courtyard and negro-quarters the change was still more striking. Instead of sullen faces, and skins gray with dandruff, or blackened with dirt, ill-concealed under the tattered copperas strip, could now be seen smiling countenances, with clean white shirts covering an epidermis that shone with the luster of health. Instead of profane language and foul threats, often followed by the lash, could be heard the twanging of the banjo, accompanied by its simple song, and the cheerful voice of Sambo excited in "chaff, or bright laughing laughter.

The change is easily explained. It was not the arrival of Sambo nor the same "obsecan," nor yet the same master. The whole personnel of the place was different. A party of the patricial type had succeeded to the tyrant; and Captain Backelder was gone away, few of his neighbors being wiser, and fewer cruel. By his cruelty he had lost much, as by the courses pursued by his son—the latter having almost brought him to bankruptcy. To escape his debts, he had sold his plantation, though still retaining his slaves—most of them being unsaleable on account of their well-known wickedness.

Taking these along with him, he had "started west."

To one emigrating from the banks of the Mississippi this may seem an unfitting expression. But at the time a new "west" and a "far" one had just entered on the stage of civilization. It was called California, a country at that time little known; for it had late come into the possession of the United States, and the report of its golden treasures, although on the way, had not yet reached the meridian of the Mississippi.

It was its grand agricultural wealth, with far more than its trifling riches, that was attracting people from the sea to the plains—this and the necessity of escape from the big

republic's society that had sprung up around him in the "Choctaw Purchase."

He had not taken departure alone. Three or four other families, not very dissimilar either in circumstances or character, had gone off along with him.

Let us follow upon their track. Through three months have passed since their leaving the eastern side of the Mississippi, we shall be in time to overtake them; for they are still plodding their slow and weary way across the grand prairie.

The picture presented by an emigrating party is one long subject—one common; yet never can it be regarded without a sense of interest. It appeals to a pleasant sentiment, receding decades, and perhaps most romantic period of our history. The huge Conestoga wagon, with its canvas tilt turned to a snowy whiteness by many a storm of rain, not improppably styled the "ship of the prairies"; its muddled load of tools and utensils, with house-furniture and cooking-utiles, keeping alive the remembrance of the home left behind, still more vividly brought to mind by those dear horses and drivers seen under the screen of canvas; the sun-tanned and burly drivers, with gun on shoulder, riding in advance of the company; and if a Southern migration, the saddle containing its slave accompanied, all combine to form a picture which can never be forgotten.

An interesting picture was that presented by the migratory party of Mississippi planters, en route for far California. It was a caravan of the smaller kind—only six wagons in number, with eight or ten white men for its escort. The journey was full of danger, and they knew this who had undertaken it. But their characters had hindered them from increasing their number; and, in the case of more than one, the danger involved was almost as much dreaded as any that might be before them.

I will now follow one of the old "trails" of the traders, at the time I was passing by the emigrants, and especially the Indians of the Western States. It was the route leading to the Arkansas or Bent's Fort, and thence striking northward along the base of the Rocky Mountains to the pass known as "Bridger's."

At that time the pass and the trails on both sides of it, were reported "safe." That is, safe by comparison. The Indians had been awed by a sight unusual to them—the passage through their territory of large bodies of United States troops—Doniphan's expedition to New Mexico, with those of Cooke and Kearney to California. For a short interval it had restrained them from their attacks upon the traders' caravan; even from the assassination of the lonely trapper.

As none of Blackadder's party was either very brave, or very reckless, they were proceeding with great caution, keeping scouts in the advance by day, and guards around the camp by night.

And thus, watchful and wary, had they reached Bent's Fort in safety. Thence an Indian hunter who chanced to be loitering around the fort—a Choctaw who spoke a little English—was engaged to conduct them northward to the Pass; and, resuming their journey under his guidance, they had reached Bijou Creek, a tributary of the Platte, and one of the most beautiful streams of prairie land.

They had formed their encampment for the night, after the fashion practiced upon the prairies—with the wagons locked tongue and wheel, inclosing a hollow space—the corral—so called after a word brought by the prairie-merchants from New Mexico.

The travelers were more than usually cheerful. The great chain of the Rocky Mountains was in sight, with Long's Peak raising its snow-covered summit, like a vast beacon-star to welcome, and show them the way, into the land of promise that lay beyond it.

They expected, moreover, to reach St. Vrain's Fort, by the evening of the next day; where, safe from Indian attack, and relieved from camp watching, they could once more rest and recruit themselves.

But in that hour of relaxation, while they were looking at Long's Peak, its snowy crown still gilded by the rays of the setting sun, there was a cloud coming from that same quarter that threatened to overwhelm them.

It was not the darkening of the night, nor mist from the mountain-sides; but a dusky shadow more to be feared than either.

They had no fear of it. They neither saw, nor knew of its existence; and, as they gathered around their camp-fire to make their evening repast, they were as gay as such men might be expected to be, under similar circumstances.

To many of them it was the last meal they were ever destined to eat; as was that night the last of their lives. Before another sun shone upon Long's Peak, one-hundred and their number was sleeping the sleep of death—their *corralled wagons* inclosing a space afterward to become their cemetery.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### A PAINTED PARTY.

ABOUT five miles from the spot upon which the emigrants were encamped, and almost at the same hour, another party had pitched their tents upon the plain.

There was not the slightest resemblance between the two sets of travellers, either in personal appearance, in the language spoken, or in their camp-equipments.

The latter were all horsemen, unencumbered with wagons, and without even the impediment of tents.

On dismounting they had simply staked their horses on the grass, and lain down upon their bell-do-robes, that were to serve them both as shelter and for couches.

There were about two score of them in all; and all without exception were men. Not a woman or child was among them. They were young men too; though to this there were several exceptions.

To have told the color of their skins it would have been necessary to submit them to ablation; since that portion of it, not covered by a broad cloak with long curtains of leather, was so dimpled with paint that not a spot of the natural tint could be detected.

After this, it is scarcely necessary to say, that they were Indians; or to add that their painted bodies, nude from neck to waist, proclaimed them "on the war-trail."

There were other evidences of this, in the manner in which they were armed. Most of them carried guns. On a hunting excursion they would have had bows and arrows—the prairie tribes prefer these weapons in the chase. They had their spears, too, slung lance-fashion by the side of the saddle; with tomahawks stuck in their belts. All of them were furnished with the *lazo*.

Among them was one sufficiently conspicuous, to be at once recognized as their chief. His superior dress and attire more told of his title to this distinction; while there was that mien bearing toward the others, that placed it beyond doubt. They seemed not only to fear, but respect him; as if something more than the accident of hereditary rank gave him a claim to command them.

And he on his side seemed to rule them; not despotically, but with a firmness of tone and bearing that brooked no disobedience. On alighting from his horse on the spot selected for their camp, the animal was unyoked by another, and taken away to the pasture-place; while the chief himself, donning a splendid cloak of white wolf-skins, spread it on the grass, and lay down upon it. Then taking a pipe from a embroidered pouch, and lighting it, he seemed to give himself up to solitary meditation—as if he had no need to take further trouble about the affairs of the camp, and none of the others would venture to intrude upon his privacy.

None did, save his immediate attendant; who brought him his supper, after it had been prepared, and assisted also in arranging his sleeping-place.

Between him and his attendant not a word was exchanged, and only a few with one of the others. They related to setting the camp sentinels, with some instructions about a scout that might be expected to come in during the night.

After that the chief stretched himself on his robe, refilled the pipe with fresh tobacco, drew from it a long drag, and for some time lay smoking with his eyes fixed upon the moon. Her light, so splendid in the pure atmosphere of the great plains, failing to pierce him, displayed a figure of surpassing proportions—in every look courage and strength.

As to the face, nothing could have been told of it, even if it had been seen under a light. Painted with vermilion on a

ground of ochreous earth, with strange devices on his cheek and cheeks, it resembled a painted escutcheon more than a human face. The features, however, showing a certain nobility, tell them to be those of a young man, who, but for the disfiguring of the paint, might have appeared handsome.

Still, there was something in his eyes, as they glowed under the silvery moonlight—that betrayed an evil disposition. No water could have run out of them that cast at once sinister and sad.

It was strange—so youthful—for he seemed certainly not over twenty—could have obtained such control over the turbulent spirits around him. One and all of them, though also young, were evidently of this character. He was either the son of some chief long and universally revered, or a youthful brave who had performed feats of valor entitling him to respect.

The land, over which he exercised sway, could be only an expeditionary party belonging to some one of the large prairie tribes; and the materials composing it pointed to its being one of those roving troops of young and reckless braves, often encountered upon the plains—the terror of trappers and travelers.

There was something unusual in this chief of youthful mind, keeping apart from his comrades, and holding them in such control.

While they were carousing around their campfire, he was quietly smoking his pipe; and after they had gone to sleep, he was still seen lying wide awake upon his wolf-skins!

It was a singular place in which he and his followers had encamped; a spot romantically picturesque. It was in a forested glen forming a flat meadow of about six acres in extent, and covered with grass of the short-grass species. It was inclosed on three sides by a bluff rising sheer up from the prairie, and bounded by the timber of streams, whose water cascaded over the precipice, with a fall of some twenty feet.

On the side open toward the east could be obtained a clear view of the prairie, stretching away to the banks of Big Creek. With the moon sliding down on the soft grassy sward; the Indian's group laboring on it; the war-horse of the young chief, the stream flowing like

a serpent as it swept silently past them; the cascade sparkling above; and around the dark framing of cliffs; you have a picture of Rocky Mountain life, that, though rare to you, is common to those who have traversed that region of romance.

It did not appear to have any charm for the young chief, who lay stretched upon the wolf-skins. Evidently thinking of something else, he took no note of the scenery immediately, further than now and then to raise himself upon his elbow, and gaze for a time toward that portion of it that was least picturesque; the monotonous surface of the plain stretching eastward. That he was scanning it not for itself, but for something he expected to appear upon it, would have been made manifest to one who could have known his thoughts. Expressed in English they would have run thus:

"Wahogn should have been here by this. I wonder what's detaining him. He must have seen our signs, and should know where to find us. May be that no Indians are hindering him from stealing a horse out of their camp. As such people they ought to trust him to go anywhere. Well, come now or not I shall attack them all the same—this night. Oa! what a sweet vengeance! But the sweeter, if I can only take them alive—one and all. Then indeed shall I have true revenge!"

"What can be keeping the Choctaw? I should not have trusted him, but that he speaks the white man's tongue. They'd have suspected any other. He's stupid, and may spoil my plans. I want them—must have them alive!"

"Now, if he should turn traitor and put them on their guard? Perhaps take them on to the fort? No—no; he would not do that. He hates the white man much as I myself, and with nearly as good reason. Besides, he dare not do ~~it~~. If he did—"

The soliloquy of the recumbent chief was suddenly interrupted, and his thoughts diverted into a different channel, by a sound reaching his ear, that seemed to come from the distant prairie. It was the hoof-stroke of a horse; but so faint, that only a practised ear could have heard, much less make out what was causing it.

In an instant he had changed his attitude, and lay with cheek closely pressed to the turf. In another instant he muttered to himself:

"A horse—a single horse—must be the Choctaw!"

He raised himself upon his knees and looked out over the plain. A low ridge ran obliquely up to the mouth of the gorge in which the Indians were reposing. There was a clump of bushes upon its crest; and over the tops of these he could perceive a small disk, darker than the foliage. He knew it had not been there before.

While he was scanning it, there came, as if out of the bushes, three short barks, followed by a long, lugubrious how. It seemed the cry of the prairie-wolf. But he knew it was not this; for it was repeated with a different intoning.

Simultaneously with the second utterance, a similar cry was sent back as it in answer. It was the response of the camp-guard, who was keeping watch among the horses. And in this there was an intonation different from either of the others. It was evidently understood by him who had signaled from without, and told him he might safely approach: for the instant after, the dark spot above the bushes was seen moving along behind them; and presently appeared by the side of the clump in the shape of a man on horseback.

It was a horseman in the garb of a white hunter; but the moon falling full upon his face, showed the copper-colored skin of an Indian.

He rode forward to the edge of the camp; exchanged some words in a low tone with the horse-guard, that had answered his signal; and then came toward the chief, who had risen to receive him. The salutation told him to be the Choctaw so impatiently expected.

"Waboga has delayed long," said the chief, half-reproachfully. "It is now after midnight. He knows we must make our attack before morning."

"The Yellow child need not be troubled about the time. The sleeping place of the white travelers is near at hand. It will take but an hour to reach it. Waboga was detained against his will."

"Hal how?"

"The pale-faces had grown suspicious, and watched him. Some trappers, on their way to St. Vrain's fort, came up with the emigrant train after sunrise, and stayed with it till the noon-hour. They must stay over and spending the night the

All day after, Waboga could see that the white men were watching him?"

"Then they are not encamped where I wished them?"

"They are. The Yellow chief may rest sure of it. They were not so suspicious as that; but allowed the guile to conduct them to their sleeping-place. It is in the creek bend where Waboga was instructed to take them."

"Good! And their numbers?"

"Nine white men in all--with their women and children. Of the blacks about five times as many--men, squaws, and pappooses."

"No matter for them. Describe the whites?"

"The chief of the caravan, a man of middle age—a planter. Waboga well knows his kind. He remembers them when a boy dwelling beyond the Big river—in the land of which his people have been despoiled."

"A planter. Any family with him?"

"A son, who has seen some twenty-four summers—like the father in every thing but age; a daughter, grown to a woman—not like either. She is fair as a flower of the prairie."

"It is she—it is they!" muttered the chief to himself, his eyes glistening in the moonlight with an expression at once triumphant and diabolical. "Oh! 'twill be a sweet revenge!"

"Of the other whites," continued the Choctaw, "one is a tall man, who has much to do with the management. He acts under the orders of the planter. He carries a great whip, and often uses it on the shoulders of the black slaves."

"He shall have his punishment, too. But not for that. They deserve it."

"The other six white men are—"

"No matter; only tell me how they are armed. Will they make resistance?"

Waboga did not think they would—not much. He believed they would let themselves be taken alive.

"Enough!" exclaimed the Cheyenne chief—for it was to this tribe the Indian belonged. "The time has come. Go wake our warriors, and hold yourself ready to guard us."

Then, turning upon his heel, he commenced gathering up his arms, that lay scattered around the robe on which he had been reposing.

His body-servant, already aroused, was soon in attendance upon him; while the slumbering warriors, one after another, started from savage dreams, sprung to their feet, and hurried toward their horses.

The best-drilled squadron of light cavalry could not have got half so quickly into their saddles, as did this painted troop of Cheyennes.

In less than ten minutes after receiving the command to march, they were beyond the bounds of their bivouac—equipped for any kind of encounter!

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## CHAPTER V.

### A TRAITOROUS GUIDE.

As already known, the emigrants had *corralled* their wagons on the banks of Bijou Creek.

The spot selected, or rather to which their Indian guide had conducted them, was in a bend of the stream, that looped around the encampment in the shape of a horse's shoe. It included an area of some four or five acres of grassy ground—resembling a new-mown meadow.

With an eye to security, it could not, to all appearance, have been better chosen. The creek, running sluggishly around the loop, was deep enough to foil any attempt at fording; while the narrow, isthmus-like neck could be defended with advantage. It had not been the choice of the travelers themselves, but of their Indian guide; who, as already stated, had presented himself to them at Bent's fort, and been engaged to conduct them through Bridger's Pass. Like the white man's tongue, though but indifferently, and being a Choctaw, as he declared himself, they had no suspicion of his hostility; until but very day, when a band of trappers, who chanced to pass them on the route, and who knew something of the Indian's character, had warned them to beware of him. They had obeyed the warning, so far as lay in the power of men so little acquainted with the

prairies. And how could they suspect a guide, who had chosen for their night's camping-place a spot that seemed the very place for their security? How could they suppose that the deep, slow stream, running silently around them, could have been designed for any other purpose than that of defense? It never entered their minds to suppose it could be intended as a trap. Why should it?"

If my mind could have given them this thought, it would have been when they had heard from the trappers. Some of them had reflected upon the character given of their guide. But more discredited it, believing it to be only ill-will on the part of the whites toward the Indian—like thoughts a hunter. Others said it was a trapper joke—a story told to scare them.

There was something odd in the eagerness the Indian had shown in directing them to their present camping-ground. It was some distance from the traveled track, where they had seen other places that appeared sufficiently suitable. Why should he have taken the trouble to bring them to the bank of the creek?

The man who made this reflection was Snively, the overseer. Snively didn't like the look of the "red-skin," though he was a Choctaw, and spoke a little English. That he had come originally from the other side of the Mississippi was not proof of his being honest; for Mr. Snively had no great faith in the integrity of men hailing from the "Choctaw Patches"—whatever the color of their skin, red, white, or black.

His suspicions about the guide, communicated to his fellow-travelers, were adopted by several of them, though not by their leader. Squire Blackadder scouted the idea of treason, as did also his son.

Why should the Choctaw betray them? It was not as if he had been one of the prairie Indians, and belonging to some predatory band. He was merely a wanderer from his own tribe; who, in the reserve allotted to them west of Arkansas State, were now living as an independent and half-civilized people. He could have no motive in leading them astray, but the contrary. He was not to receive his pay, or compensation for acting as their guide, until after their arrival on the other side of the mountains. A good sum had been promised him

Was it likely he should do any thing to forfeit it? So reasoned Squire Blackadder and several of the emigrants who accompanied him.

Snively and the others were not satisfied; and resolved to keep a sharp eye upon the Indian.

But, watchful as they were from that time forward, they failed to see him, as he slipped out of their camp, near the middle of night, taking along with him one of the best horses belonging to the caravan!

He must have got away by leading the animal for some distance along the edge of the stream, concealed under the shadow of the banks. Otherwise, on the open prairie, with the moon shining down upon its treeless sward, he could not have eluded the vigilance of the camp-guards, one of whom was Snively himself.

It was only by an accident that his departure was discovered, and just before daybreak. The horse he had taken chanced to be a mare, that some weeks before had dropped a foal. It was too fair a creature to be left behind upon the prairies, and had been therefore brought along with its dam.

The colt, after a time missing its mother, ran hinnying about, till its cries of distress startled the camp from its slumbers. Then a search on all sides resulted in the universal conviction: that their guide had betrayed them, or, at all events, had stolen off, taking the mare along with him!

There was no more sleep for the eyes of the emigrants. One and all ran willy-nilly around the wagons—the whites meeting each other with cautions and curses, alike contradictory; the blacks—men, women and children—huddling together, and giving voice to their fears in shrieks and chattering.

And, in the midst of this confusion, a dark mass was seen moving across the prairie, upon which the white light of the moon was already becoming blended with that of the gray dawn.

At first it came slowly and silently, as though stealing toward the camp. Then, as if concealment was no longer desirable, the mass broke into a scattered cloud, showing it to be composed of horsemen.

Their trampling sounded upon the turf, at the same time that a wild yell, resounding simultaneously from three-score throats,

struck terror into the hearts of the emigrants. There could be no mistaking that cry. It was the war-whoop of the Cheyennes.

The travelers had no time to reflect upon it; it was the slogan of attack; and before they could think of any plan for defending themselves, the dusky horsemen were on a hand, swooping down upon them like the breath of a tornado!

The emigrants were not all cowards. Three or four were men of courage, and not the least courageous was Salter, the overseer. Still was it more by a mechanical impulse, than any hope of successfully defending themselves, that they discharged their guns in the faces of the approaching Indians.

It did not stay the impetuosity of the charge. Their shots were returned by a volley from the guns of their savage assailants, followed up by a thrusting of spears; and, in less than ten minutes' time, the *corrals* was captured.

When the day broke, it disclosed a scene, since then, alas, far from infrequent on the prairies. A wagon-train, with its tails torn down, and the contents strewed around it; the team that had drawn it along, standing near, and wondering what had befallen it; their owners, in captivity, some of them bound hand and foot, others lying senseless upon the turf!

Embracing all, a cohort of painted savages; some keeping guard over the captives, others reveling in an unceasing Saturnalia; some dead-drunk, others reeling in a state of semi-intoxication—each with cup in hand, filled with the mead or taken from the captured wagons!

Such was the spectacle on Bijou Creek on that morning, when the emigrant train of the ex-Mississippi planter fell into the hands of a war-party of Cheyennes, led by the Yellow Chief.

## CHAPTER VI.

## TWO TRAPPERS.

The gorge in which the young Cheyenne chief and his followers had made their night bivouac, was only one of a series of similar gorges, that, with short intervals between, fringed the foot of the sierra where it edged upon the open plain. It was not the main chain of the Rocky Mountains, but a spur running out into the plain.

About a mile farther along, and nearer to Bijou Creek, was another gorge, not very dissimilar in size, but somewhat different in character. Instead of having an embouchure open to the plain, it was shut in on all sides by bluffs, rising abruptly above it to the height of over a hundred feet.

There was an outlet, nevertheless; where a tiny spring, broken, gurgling forth from the bottom of the encircling cliffs, passed out into the open country, after making its way through a cañon, which it had no doubt cut for itself in the course of countless ages.

But as it needed a cleft no wider than might admit the body of a man, not much wider was it, from top to bot' m of the cañon. A traveler might have passed within a hundred yards of its outer face looking toward the plain, without perceiving it save in the precipice, or taking it only for a fissure in the *façade* of the rocks.

The enclosed space inside, in other respect differed from the cañon and had been occupied by the Indians. Its bottom was thickly timbered by cedarwood and other trees; winding the crevices of the cliff, and wherever a crevice allowed room and action, grew pines and the creeping willow. It seemed a favorite haunt for the owls and bats, but only at night. By day the bats appeared to have left possession of it — — — — — with their sweet voices, and banished only the raven who clattered past, that vociferously "whistled his way" or laughed his maniac laugh — — — — — in the cañon over-  
head.

Only from the heights above could a view be had of the "hole"; and to get this required climbing, beyond any thing curiosity was likely to encourage. No prairie traveler would have taken the trouble, unless he chanced to be a German geologist, hammer in hand, or a botanist of the same inquiring race, in search of rare plants. Led by the love of science, these simple but ardent explorers go everywhere, into every cranny and corner of the earth—even the "holes" of the Rocky Mountains, where often have their dead bodies been found, with heads stripped of their skins by the knife of the indiscriminating savage.

Ascending the cliff from the outside, and looking down into the gorge described, you might fancy that no human being had ever entered it. To do so would cost some exertion. And some danger too: for there was a hundred feet of precipitous rock to be scaled downward, at the risk of getting a broken neck.

Some one had taken this risk, however; for on the same night in which the Cheyenne chief had sallied out to attack the emigrant camp, only a little later and nearer morning, a fire might have been seen glimmering among the cottonwood trees that covered the bottom of the glen.

It could only have been seen from a particular point above, where no one was likely to be straying. On all other sides it was concealed by the thick foliage of the trees, through which its smoke, scattering as it passed upward, became dissipated into thin haze before reaching the crest of the cliff.

By this fire, far remote from the hearths of civilization, two men were seated, bearing but slight resemblance to each other. One was characteristic of the scene; his costume and accoutrements, in short, his *tout-ensemble*, proclaiming him unmistakably a trapper. Hunting-shirt of dressed deer-hide, fringed at cape and skirt, leggings of like material, mocca-soled with *parfleche*, and on his head a felt hat, with crown and brim showing long service. His hair, close-cropped, gave little framing to his face, that was naturally dark in color, but darker with dirt, sun-tan and wrinkles. It looked the face of a man who had seen nearly sixty summers, and quite as many winters.

His companion was not over half his age, nor in any way

like the man we have taken for a trapper, although garbed in the costume common to "mountain men." He wore the hunting-shirt, breeches and moccasins; but all were tastefully cut and elaborately embroidered.

It might have been the difference between youth and age; and both may have been trappers alike. Still was there something about the younger man—a delicacy of feature and refinement of manner—very different from those who take to this rude, adventurous calling.

A thought of the kind seemed to have come uppermost in the mind of his older companion, as they sat by their camp-fire just kindled. It still wanted half an hour of sunrise; and they had issued out of their skin lodge, standing close by, to cook their morning meal. It was preparatory to starting out on a tour of inspection to their traps, set overnight in the streams near at hand. A large flitch of buffalo meat, comprising several hump-ribs, was roasting in the blaze; and they were waiting till it should be sufficiently done.

It was the elder who spoke first; at least upon a subject foreign to the preparation of their repast.

"Darn it, Ned!" said he, "I hev been dreamin' 'bout ye last night."

"Indeed! I hope nothing that promises bad luck. Bah! why should I think of luck, one way or the other? For me there can be none in the future worse than I've had in the past. What was your dream, 'Lige?"

"Oh! nuthin' much. I only thort I see'd ye alongside o' a gurl; an' she war a-pullin' at ye to git ye away from the lightnings. She war tryin' to tote ye along wi' her."

"She didn't succeed, I suppose?"

"Well! I woke up 'fore it kin to that. Bet ef't hed been the gurl as I see'd in my dream, an' it war all true, I reck'n she'd 'a' hed a good chance."

"And pray what girl did you see in your dream?"

"Maybe you'd like me to pronounce the name; ef ye do, I'd say Cat' Blackeller. She war the very gurl as war a-draggin' at ye."

At the mention of the name "Ned" heaved a deep sigh, though the sizzling of the hump-rib's hindered his companion from hearing it. But, by the brighter light caused by the fat

falling among the cinders, a shadow could be seen suddenly overspreading his countenance; his features at the same time assuming a cast half sad, half angry.

"Not much danger of th' dream coming true," he said, with an effort at composing them. "Clara Blackadder has no doubt long ago changed her name; and forgotten mine too."

"I don't think she's did eyther one or the other. Women are a kewr'ous kind o' variabit'; an' ging onto th' streets a deal harder'n we do. Besides, that girl wasn't one of the changin' sort. I knowed her since she war knock'd to a dock. She war the only one of the full family of Blackadders worth known'; for a bigger mass than the brother wasn't nowhar to be foun' in Mississipi, 'ceptin' 'twixt the o'er-squire himself. That girl loved you, Ned; an' if you'll took the right way wi' her, you mout yourself ha' had the changin' o' her name."

"What way?"

"Whipped her off on the crepper o' yer saddle—just as these liyar prairies it jis sometimes does. Ye shud ha' did t'at an' said no more about it, eyther to her father or to anybody else. It's the way I did myself wi' Sal Stoen, down yar in Tennessee bottom, with on thirty year ago. We I went down to the Chancery Purchess. Dick, her chield, was all ag'in' me havin' his gal, 'cause he had a spite at me for beatin' him at a shootin'-match. 'Twant no use his oppo' shun. I got my cutter saddle up, one night when Dick was sound asleep in his stony, an' I tied Sal on, an' took her afore a Meekely preacher, who coupled us together in the bucklin' of a goat's tail. An' I never had reason to regret, sal made me a good wife, as far's she liv'd. I hadn't had a better 'un since."

The young man smiled sadly at the strangeness of his trapper companion; but the subject being a painful one to him, he made no rejoinder.

"I bet's what you ought to do I wi' Clar' Black' Adder," prodded the trapper, without minding his companion's distress. "Get clear away wi' her. Ef ye'd 'a' hed her for yur wife, it 'ad 'a' been diff'rent for ye now. Instead o' bein' liyar in the mornings, uspin' yer惯ards out—for I kin see ye're doin'

that, Ned—ye meat now been settled in the State o' Mississipp, workin' a cotton plantashan wi' a suar chance o' rigg'r'n't. Not as I myself said care 'bout evther; for arter twenty year o' ramblin' over these hyar regions, I didn't like to live in the settlement. It's different wi' you, however, who don't always shoot it for a trapp'r's life—though I'll say thar didn't a better shot or hunter in all these parishes. Anybody kin see ye're only hyar for a diff'rent purpos'; tho' I reckon Lige Orton air the only han to which you've confidec yurself. Well; you know I like ye, Ned; an' that's why I don't have to see ye go down in the dumps. They've been on you ever since you left Mississipp; an' I reckon you'll find no cure for 'em out hyar."

"Admit it, Lige, that I still think of Miss Blackadder. As I know you are my friend, I will admit it. But what would you have me do?"

"Go back to the Choctaw Parishes, get once more 'long-side the gal, an' do wi' her as I did wi' Sal Slocom—run away wi' her."

"But she may be married? Or perhaps no longer cares for me?"

This was said with a sigh.

"Neither one nor t'other. Lige Orton air willing to let high on thar. First place, that war reezins she wouldn't git married easy. The ole squire, her dad, wasn't particular 'bout the Parishes; an' I don't think he war over rich. The young han must 'a' spent most of the shinners as come in for the cotton. I know you wouldn't 'a' cared 'bout thar; but others will; an' I guess Char' Blackadder won't have to leave her ole home in the sets o' the best planters; an' I guess too she won't be hard to hav' any o' the second-best's. Then she likely a powerful. She told me so, tame I war back thar, just arter you left. Yes, Ned; she like t' you, an' like this gal's will for it, she'll stick to that han' as death to a dead man."

Quaint and queer as was the trap, it's talk, it was pleasant to the ear of Edward O'Neill; for such was the name of the young man—the same who had made suit for the hand of Clara Blackadder, and been so totally rejected by her father.

Of his life since that time the story is easily supposed. Or

leaving the State of Mississippi he had gone westward into that of Arkansas; staying some time at Little Rock. He had afterward made his way to the Rocky Mountains, in the hope that among their deep defiles he might be enabled to bury the sorrow that was preying upon him. Chance had brought him in contact with 'Lije Orton, a noted trapper of the time, and something besides had made them trapping companions, as well as fast friends: for 'Lije, though of rude habit and exterior, was at the heart true as steel.

The young Irishman, smiling at the crude simile of his companion, made no reply. Indeed, there was no opportunity: for, while delivering it, 'Lije saw that the buffalo-ribs were sufficiently roasted; and, leaning forward over the fire, he transferred them from the spit to a large wooden platter, taken out of his "*possible sack*." Before any response could be given, he had separated the ribs with his knife; and, taking hold of one in both hands, he commenced stripping it with his teeth, as quickly and adroitly as could have been done by the hungriest *coyote*.

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## CHAPTER VII

### BREAKFAST INTERRUPTED.

THE two trappers had got about half through their Homeric meal, when a sound reached their ears that caused them not only to stop mastication, but hold the half-polished ribs suspended, as if they would have dropped them out of their hands! It was a shot they heard—first one, and then several others following in quick succession. They were heard only indistinctly, as if fired far off upon the prairie. But even thus, the sounds were not agreeable; for the report of fire-arms in that solitary region has a significance, and not always a safe one. It might be a friend, who has discharged his gun; but it is more likely to be an enemy. Evidently so believed the two trappers, else they would not have fixed their camping-place in a spot so difficult of access—requiring such

to wade waist-deep in water, and twice too, every time they went a hundred yards from their tent! The spring-branch occupying the full bed of the cañon, the only way by which they could conveniently pass out to the plain, called for this circumlocution. But the same gave them protection against ill intruders.

"Stand up, Ned!" cried his companion, "an' see what you kin see."

The request was at once complied with; the younger trapper, laying down his half-picked bone, commenced climbing the steep face of the rock, assisted by the branches of the cedars. Life remained below, continuing his matutinal meal.

In a few seconds' time O'Neil had reached the summit of the cliff; and with a small binocular glass, which he had taken up along with him, commenced examining the country in the direction whence the shots appeared to have come.

It was yet only the earliest dawn, and the plain toward the east was still shrouded in darkness. But as the young man kept gazing through the glass, a quick flash came before its field, followed by the report of a gun. At the same instant, sparks flew up, as if from a fire that had been trampled upon, and on the still morning air he could hear the confused sounds of strife, in which human voices appeared to be intermingled with the yelling of demons!

"Dive see any thing, boy?" called his comrade from below. "I heard another shot out yonderward. You must 'a' see'd the flash o't."

"More than that," responded the young man, speaking with bold front. "Come up, Life! There's a fight going on out there! Some travelers have been attacked, as I can tell by the spattering of their blood. They appear to have been scalped, and by Indians. Come up, quick!"

The old trapper, regarding his comrade as being interrupted in his desire, stepped to thebuffalomb; and taking his rifle and shotgun, commenced scaling the cliff.

By the time he had joined his companion on the summit, the day had almost dawned; for the morning twilight is of short duration on the low-waters of the Southern Platte.

Looking eastward over the plain, they could now see some

thing more than the gleaming of camp-fires; the white tilts of wagons set in *corraled* shape, and around them dark forms, both of men and horses, swarming and moving like bees living upon a branch. They could hear, too, the sounds of strife still continuing, or it might be the exulting shouts succeeding a triumph.

"A camp o' whites," said the old trapper, speaking half to himself, and half to his comrade. "That's clear from their havin' wagons. An' they've been attacked by Injuns; that's equally sartin from the shouts. That's no mistakin' them yet. They kedn't come from any other than a Injoo's throat. I wonder who the whites kin be?"

His young comrade, equally wondering, but still busy with his binocular, made no rejoinder.

"A party o' emigratin' travelers, I reck'n," pursued the old trapper. "Can't a be any o' Bent's or St. Vrain's people. They w'u'dn't 'a' got surprised that eezy, nor 'ud they 'a' gone under so quick. Sartin sure hev they gone under. Listen to them yells! That's the conquerin' screech o' Injuns, sence as my name's 'Lije Orton!'"

His companion did not need any assurance, beyond what he himself heard and saw. There could be no doubt about its being a traveling party, either of emigrants or prairie traders, that had succumbed to an onslaught of savages.

Neither were they long doubtful as to the character of the travelers. The sun, now peeping up over the far prairie-edge, illuminated the scene of strife, showing half a dozen wagons, with some of their canvas covers dragged off; and around them the dark forms of a savage cohort.

"It's a kanyym o' emigrants, as I tak it for," said the trapper. "Ruther a small 'un at that! What d'nt I tell? They must 'a' been to ventur' across the prairie with a little o' stren' th as they 'pear to hev! To y're self, I cut ' now, I reck'n; or them as lives ar capach, an' in the hands o' the Injuns.

"If them Injuns be, as I suspect they ur, Yellow Calf an' his band, the Lord pity them poor critters! They've all got rubbed out in the scrimmage, and that 'ud 'a' been a eend o'it."

"Yellow Calf!" repeated the trapper's companion. "And

If it be he, the crook ruffian, and he have captives, you are right, 'Lige, I'm flyin' to ya. I heard some terrible tales of him last time I was over at Bent's Fort. Whatever the Indians tell, they won't fail to have taken some captives. A couple dozen—there should be women and children along with 'em! Surely the savages will not kill them! Can we do nothin' toward rescuin' them? Can we not save them? Think, 'Lige!'

"I am a-thinkin', an' hev been, ever since I kem up hyur. But I can't no use. We mout think our heads off, without devisin' any way to be of use to them. We'd only git ourselves into the same trap as they're in—an' maybe worse; for them Cheyennes—specially Yellow Chief's gang—hez late tuk a special delight ag'in us trappers, because, as they say, some o' our traps carried off one o' their squaws from the place where they war campin' last spring in the Middle Park. If it's the Cheyenne troups as is spreadin' out thar, the furter we keep away from 'em the longer we'll bev hair on our heads. How'd you's met talkin' comin' on yester?"

The examination, as the query that followed, was called for at sight of a dark object, that seemed to be moving over the prairie, and in the direction of the cliff—from the top of which the two trappers, themselves concealed behind a cedar tree, were scanning the onward plain. It had the appearance of a small being; but one so diminutive in size and of such coloration that it might have passed for a fresh-dropped buffalo-calf, or one of the dark-brown wolves sometimes seen among the marmots. And it seemed to go with a crouching gait, as of the right animal of a man!

"It's a boy!" cried the old trapper, as the moving object approached him. "A mite, an' a boy at that! Durn if I don't! What a comin' young darky he be! Look at his wings! He's a hawk, mawn, crawlin' from scrub to scrub! Darned if they ain't with his weight in best rascals! Now, I kin see how it air. He's been one o' the hawks, as they tell, I reck'd, must le from the South; he's their species, mawn; an' seem like matter rubbed out, least a leggin' on his own account. Wagh! he's comin' right this way! Now, yo'fe sopl'r than I'm; shoot out, an' try ef ye kin catch him, whiles I stay hyur, an' look out

for what's a-doin' yonder. Git your claws on the darky, ef ye kin, an' we may Parn all about it."

O'Neil sprung down the cliff; and, wading through the cañon, was soon alongside the black-skinned fugitive—a negro boy, as anticipated.

There was no chase required for the catching him; the darky was already breathless and broken down, after his long run; and submitted to being taken prisoner without any attempt at running away—the more readily no doubt on seeing that his captor was white.

The young Irishman did not question him on the spot; but, at once conducting him into the cove, called to his comrade to come down.

"Wal, ye young imp o' darkness!" began the trapper, as soon as he had descended, "whar hev you come from, so skeeart-like?"

"From de wagins, massa—de wagins, whar da wa' camp—"

"What wagons?"

"De wagins dat we're all a-travelin' wif 'cross big prairie. Dar war de white folk and de col'd people, all ob de plant-esa'n'; an' I 'speck dey all kill'd 'ceptin' maself."

"Who kilt them?"

"De Injuns, dem as war painted red, an' white, an' clery color—dey come gallop up on da horses jes' as our folks wa' 'bout to git breakfass; an' 'fore we know what we doin' dey fire dar gun, an' run dar long'pears troo de people. Oh, massa! I's sure ebbery body gone kill'd."

"Wharsore de ye think that?"

"Kase I see ole massa fall down an' blood 'reaming out o' him face, an' den I see ob-suh ah fire shot from his gun, an' den de young missa she holler out, an' so did all de rest ob de women an' chil'ren, boaf de blacks an' de whites. Gammy! how dey did 'cream!'

"What war the name o' yur ole massa, as ye call him? Kin ye tell us that?"

"Law, boss, sartin I kin tell dat. Ebbery body know de name ob de missa. He call de Squiah Blackedder."

"Squire Blackedder?"

"Squire Blackedder?" asked O'Neil, listening with intense anxiety for the answer.

"Ya, massa; dat am de name."

"Whar did ye come from? Kin ye tell thet, darky?"

"From Massissipi state—de ole plantashun ain't lerry far from de town o' Vick'burg, on de big ribba."

This was about all the information the negro lad could give.

It was sufficient for the time. On obtaining it, the trapper threw up his hands, and gave utterance to a loud "Phew"; while his companion stood silent, as if suddenly struck dumb!

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## CHAPTER VIII

### PLANNING A RESCUE.

"What's best to be done? What d'ye say, Ned?"

"Let us go straight to the place, and see what has happened! Oh, heavens! If Clara has been killed!"

"Go straight to the place! You're dreamin', young'un! Suppose it be Yellow Cliff an' his crowd o' cut-throats? We'd both of us get scalped to a certainty!"

"But we might approach under cover near enough—"

"No, not for nothing! That ain't no river in that quarter, as I know se fum hyur; an' to cut across the prairie, 'd be to go straight sartain inter the teeth o' them squallin' devils. They're bound to be drunk just about this time: an' you see it's Yellow Cliff's fort or no, we'd get sharpless from 'em. Thet ye may sw'ar to."

"We must do something, Ned. I can not bear to think that she's gone to the hands of those horrid savages, and I would do anything to rescue her! If she be living I must rescue her, even at deadly hazard. I shall never let her! We must do something, 'Lige! we must!'

"A'course, Ned, we won't be able to do somethin'! No, this can't be. May be I won't be all so off that bad boy can't be beat out in the sweepin' an' his precious comin' up wi' him, and al'ong wi' both that scoundrel o' a overseer, Sam Gately! But the girl—she's diff'rent; an' I feel as despit

on doin' somethin' for her as you kin. F'r all that it's no use our doin' whut air durned foolishness. We must set 'bout this thing wi' percausian. Hyur, you darky! Kin ye tell how many Injuns their war in the party that attackt us?"

"Dar war a big lot, massa--gobs on 'em; I's sure ne'er seen a hunder—far more'n dat."

"Bah!" exclimed the trapper, disappointedly. "'Tain't no use inquirin' o' him. See hyur, nigger! Did you notice any o' them as 'peered to be thar leeder?"

"Wha—what, massa?"

"A leeder, durn ye! A chief!"

"A chief?"

"Yes, one that war actin' as boss, or overseer."

"Ah! de boss. Yes, thar war a bossy 'mong dem; I 'pose he muss 'a' been, kase he order all de orders 'bout."

"Kin ye describe what he war like? How war he dressed? What sort o' duds had he on him?"

"Easy 'nuf dat, massa. He drest mos' like de ress ob dem—only on de top ob him he'd dar wa' a big sp'ed ob feather, skinin' like de tail o' a peacock."

"The Yellow Chief?" exclimed the questioner.

"No, massa. He no yell'd. He wa' painted red. Dar wa' some yell'a' stripe; bat mos' ob him wa' a bright red color—redder dan blood."

"Never mind that, nigger: you don't know what I'm talkin' 'bout. What did ye see him do?"

"Se'd him try to 'top de shootin' an' killin'."

"Stop the shootin' an' killin'! You saw him tryin' to do that? Air ye sure o't, boy?"

"No, massa, I didn't see. I thought he would in' so. I didn't ghab'. I wull' know if dey'll go on will de killed, an' dat's why I took 'way from de place, an' run o' this way."

"I'll be Yellow Chief, an' heat his hand to stop the killin'. That's its way." This remark was to O'Neal, who stood chafing at the delay.

"It's strange," he answered. "In my case, it's no use our remainin' longer here, if we're going to do any thing. What can you think of, 'Lige?"

The trapper, with his right palm resting upon the stopper of his gun, stood for a while, reflecting.

"That's one thing," he said at length; "eft air this Cheyenne shuck, an' he don't kill the full lot o' them outfit, that's just a chance o' out-servin' some o' 'em."

"Thank God!" exclaims T. O'Neil, in a tone of relieved anxiety. "You think there's a chance, Lige?"

"I duz."

"In what way?"

"Well; still concedin' the pint o' its bein' Yeller Chief, I guess I try to ar what it means. He's out w' a band o' t' young braves, that ain't likely to track strait back to the trail o' their wives so long's they've got captive women among 'em."

The young Irishman started at the words. They conveyed a thought that gave pain to him; but, anxious to hear his comrade's scheme for their rescue, he did not interrupt him.

"An' eft be them, I kin guess whar they'll go—most sar-geant. This chile chances to know one o' Yeller Chief's play campin'-ground's. I vant that when I war trappin' in dis quarter two yeern ago—time's you war down stayin' at Bent's. They're over yonder now, a-planerin' the poor emigrants an' their wagons, an' we havent got strait to 'em if we want it, but sort o' our scups. But as we don't want that, the questiun is, whar they'll be when we han back in season o' 'em."

"Come back! You purpose going somewhere? Where to?"

"To St. Vrain's."

"Ah! For what purpose?"

"For to see if I can't kin serve our purpos; an' that air to get a message to me, makin' things all right us a man in this business. What I vant, will be as near as I can to t' other party—o' that be any such was for a while, I catch a Kit fox."

"Is your man dead or still alive there?"

"I don't know. The last day, he tells us o' a party left from Bent's on their way. No doubt they war killed enroute. But as I met several Indians last season when I was trappin' on the Colorado, as sayce they war scalped, an' not killed, I didn't put St. Vrain's in their way. I wouldn't be responsible if we found any o' 'em there the day. But

o' the number will be enuf to chestize Yellar Chief an' his gang o' freebooters. Thusfor' le's go to the fort right away, an' see what kin be done."

"I'm with you, 'Lijo! We must lose no time! Think of the day in she may be in; that is, if not past all danger already. Oh! I fear to reflect on it!"

"Ye're right, 'bout no losin' time," said the trapper, without noticing the last exclamatory remark. "Same time," he added, "itwon't do fur us tu make too much haste, else we mout find it the wuss spec', as the spellin'-book used ter say. We must keep close in to the bottom o' the bluffs in front St. Vrain's; else them Injuns may spy us. If they shood, we'll be in for a ugly scrape; an' not like to git clear o' it without sheddin' the skins o' our two skulls. Wagh! that 'ere w'ddn't be no way agreeable; an' eft wa'n't that there's a gurl in the questi'n, whose life, an' somethin' else, oughter be saved, I'd 'a' stayed hyur to finish my breakfast, an' let Yeller Chief an' his cut-throats go straight cu-strut to—darnation! But come, Ned! we're a-wastin' time an' I know you don't weesh that. Hyur now, nigger! you help wi' the saddlin' o' these horses. Ef you've been brought up 'bout Squire Blackedker's stables I reck'n you know somethin' 'bout horses. An' harkee, boy! we two air goin' away a bit. So you keep close in this hyur hole, till we cum back ag'in. You kin rest your black kar-kidge inside that tent, whar ye'll find somethin' in the way o' biffle-meat to keep y'ur ivories from chatterin'. Don't eat it all, d'ye hear. We may come back sharp-set; an' ef that's nothin' left, may take into our heads to eat you."

While this talk was going on, two horses were led forth from a cave in the cliff that served them for stable.

Both being quickly accorder'd, the trappers sprung into their respective saddles; and springing toward the cañon, were soon passing between its shadowy walls, on their way to the outward plain.

Sixty seconds spent in walking, and they emerged dippin' into the light of day. More of it than they wished for; since the sun was now fairly up, his disk appearing some two or three degrees above the prairie horizon.

There was need for the horsemen to show circumspection. And they did; silently skirting the cliff, and keeping behind

huge boulders, that, for long ages shed from its summit, strewed the plain at its base.

"After all, Ned," said the old trapper, when they had ridden to a safe distance from the dreaded spot, "we needn't it be a so-picketer. I reck'n, 'bout this time, that ain't a score Indian on the banks o' Bijou. I hope ole Beakleifer an' his party, about half the settlements, had in a good supply of gunpowder to keep them skunks ne'er-lame till we come git to Keweenah. Ef that be the case, that'll be some chancin' o' our chestizin' 'em."

A loud "Huzzah" was the only response made by the young Indian; who was too much occupied in thinking of Clara Beakleifer's danger, to reflect coolly on the means of rescuing her—even though it were certain she still lived.

## CHAPTER IX.

### ST. VRAIN'S.

One of the classic names associated with the "commerce of the prairies" is that of St. Vrain. Ever since trapping became a trade, or at all events, since prairie land, with its wolves, was grown to be a frequent, as well as interesting topic of conversation around the hearth-fires of the American people, the names of Bent, St. Vrain, Bonneville, Robinson, Larimer, and Pierre C. W. Long, might often be heard upon the lips of men.

And more frequently than St. Vrain; by whom during all the years of early were caravans carried across the plains and their wilderness to the Mexican settlements of Santa Fe, and to the capital in the very midst of that wide desert, and across its boundless, with a military escort, to the fortifications of every village along the Rio Grande up to the Gulf.

Yet it was not a regular line, supported by the sweat of a thousand men; only a simple defensive organization for the protection of a valuable, and valuable industry.

And when the iron-horse goes shooting through the midst

of those distant solitudes, and cities have sprung up on his track, the spots so marked in our history will become classic ground; and many a tale will be told of them, redoubtless of the richest romance.

Were I to live in the not very remote future, I would rather have within my ornamental grove the ruin of one of Bent's or St. Vrain's Forts, than the crumbling walls of Kenilworth Castle or the Keep of Carisbrooke. More picturesquely romantic, more exciting, would be the souvenirs recalled, and the memories awakened by them.

St. Vrain's trading-post, on the South Fork of the Platte, was one of those long noted as a favorite rendezvous of the free trappers; as might have been told by any one daring to make stop at it, in the season when these wandering adventurers had laid their traps to indulge in a spell of "hikes" and a "spree."

Just such a time was that when Squire Blackadder and his emigrant companions were approaching the post, and fell into the clutches of the Cheyennes. It was not one of their grandest gatherings: since only about twenty of them were there; but among twenty trappers, or even less, there is no lack of company. And if all, or even part of them, have recruited with fat packs, and found beaver selling at three dollars the "play," there will be a merry company; it may be becoming dangerous—not only to strangers, but to one another—through too much drink.

An assemblage of this sort—including, we are sorry to say, both the sober and the drunk—were at St. Vrain's Post on the day above specified. They had come there from all quarters; from the parks and "holes" of the Rocky Mountains, from the streams, creeks, and branches on this side running east, as well as from the head-waters of the Green, Bear, and Colorado couring west. Nearly all of them had made a good season of it, and arrived with their pack animals staggering under the weight of the traps and the meat.

These had become the property of the fort, after an exchange on its side of guns, knives, powder, and lead, with five-point Mackinaw blankets, and other articles of trapper wear; including those of adornment, and not forgetting some sparkling bijouterie intended as gifts, or "*gages d'amour*" for the

bronze-skinned beauties of the prairie. Rude as is the trapper's life, and solitary too, he is not insensible either to the charms of love, or its companionship.

In addition to the articles thus swapped or "trucked," the trappers assembled at St. Vrain's to exchange for their peltries, had also received a large quantity of coin currency, in the shape of Mexican silver dollars. With these burning the bottoms out of their pockets, it is scarce necessary to say that drink was the order of the day, with cards as its accompaniment.

We regret having to make this statement; as also, that quarts are the too frequent termination of these games of euchre and "poker."

Another source of strife among the trappers assembled at St. Vrain's, was to be found in the fact: that a friendly Indian tribe, the "Crows," were encamped near the post; and among these girls, notwithstanding the name, are many that are beautiful.

No such courtship suits an Indian belle. If you want to win her, you must show bravery; and you will not risk losing her affections if your bravery degenerate into brutalism!

Such are the moral inclinations of both men and women in the state called "savages"; but it must not be supposed that this is the state of Nature. On the contrary, the savages, probably so styled, have long since passed from their pristine condition of simplicity.

Several quarts had occurred among the trappers at St. Vrain's Fort—more than one had ended in the shedding of blood.—Indeed, one of the bloodiest was on the eve of breaking out, when a cry from the saddle on the azotea caused a suspension of the broil.

The quarreurs were below, on the level plain that stretched away from the grand gray entrance of the building, and covered a sort of general ground for assembly—as well for all kinds of sports, as for games of a less recommendable kind.

The shout of the entry caused them to look toward the fort, where they saw two horsemen going at a gallop, and evidently making for the fort.

The country was wild when they approached, and the way

they were urging on their steeds, told a tale of haste. It could be no caper of two men trying the speed of their horses. The animals seemed too badly blown for that.

"That's Injuns after them two sellers!" said Black Harris, a celebrated mountain man. "Or hez a-been not far back. Boys! can any o' ye tell who they are? My sight ain't so plain as 'twar twenty year ago."

"If I ain't mistook," answered another of the trapper fraternity, "that 'un on the clay-bank hoss is ole 'Lije Orton, oreeginally from Tennessee. Who the other be, darn me ef I know. A young un', I guess; an' don't look at all like these hyar purairies, though he do sit that black hoss, as though he war friz to him. Don't the feller ride spunky?"

"Ay dios!" exclaimed a man whose swarth skin and bespangled costume proclaimed him a Mexican. "Call that riding, do you? *Carrai!* on our side of the mountains a child of six years old would show you better!"

"In trath an' yez are mistaken, Misther Saynyor Sanctis as ye call yerself. I know who that gosoon is that's coming up yonder, for he's a countryman av mine; and, be the pow'rs! he kin ride to bate any Mixikan in the mountains—not like a cat stickin' on the back av a goat as yez do it; but like a gentleman. Him yon ler, beside ould 'Lije Orton, is Misther Edward Ondle, ov the Onales av County Tipperary; an' be javers, he is a gentleman be both sides av the house!"

Before this new discussion could culminate in another quarrel, the two horsemen had ridden upon the ground, and pulled up in the midst of the trappers, who, with eager, inquiring looks, gathered in a circle around them.

## CHAPTER X.

## CHANGED HOSTILITIES.

THE freshly-arrived horsemen, instead of alighting remained seated in their saddles.

For a time neither spoke; though their silence might be, for want of breath. Both were panting, as were also the horses that bore them.

"There's somethin' wrong, 'Lije Orton," said Black Harris, after saluting an old comrade. "I can tell that by y'ur looks, as well's by the perspiration on y'ur animel. "Tain't often as you put the critter in such a sweat. What is it, ole hoss? You whitey, or Injun? It can't be white."

"What's dat somethin' to do wi' it?" replied the old trapper, having somewhat recovered his wind. "But Injun more."

"That's a riddle, boys! Which o' ye kin read it? 'Splain y'rselves, 'Lije."

"There ain't much explainashin needed; only that a party o' emigrants has been attacked on Bijou Creek; an' maybe all on 'em killed, far as this chile kin tell."

"What emigrants? Who attacked them?"

"Yer first question, boys, I kin answer cl'ar enuf. They were some planters from the State o' Mississipp'."

"That's my State!" interpolated one of the trappers—a young fellow—inclined to take part in the talking.

"S'at up y'ur head!" commanded Harris, turning upon the fellow one of his blackest frowns.

"Well, what is it for y'ur State or no," continued the imperturbable 'Lije, "don't make much diff'rence. What I've got to say, boys, is this: A bunch o' emigrant planters, boun' for California, wif their niggers along, camp'd last night on the bank o' Bijou Creek. After sun-up this mornin', they was all gone by, Ireckon, and I reckon most, if not all, on 'em hev been killed off. I don't know who them emigrants was; but that's no business o' yours. Ireckon it's enuf that they war white, an' that Injuns hez kill the dev'l."

"What Indians? Do you know what tribe?"

"That oughtn't to make any diff'rence cyther," responded 'Lije. "Though I neek'n it will, when I've tol' ye who the attacktin party war, an' who led 'em. I've alser got on the trail o' that."

"Who? 'Rapahoes?"

"No."

"Tain't the direction for Blackfeet."

"Nor Blackfeet neyther."

"Cheyennes, then? I'll stake a bale o' beaver it's them same Injuns, in my opeenyun, the most trechermost as scours these hyar prairies."

"Ye wouldn't lose y'er skins," quietly responded 'Lije. "It air Cheyennes es hez done it."

"And who do you say chiefed 'em?"

"There's no need asking that," said one, "now we know it's Cheyennes. Who should it be but that young devil they call Yellow Chief? He's rubbed out more o' us white trappers than the oldest brave among 'em."

"Is it he, 'Lije?" asked several in a breath. "Is it the Yellow Chief?"

"Tain't nobody else," quietly declared the trapper.

The declaration was received by a perfect tornado of cries in which curses were mingled with threats of vengeance. All of them had heard of this Indian chieftain, whose name had become a terror to trapperdom—at least that section of it lying around the head-waters of the Platte and Arkansas. It was not the first time many of them had sworn vengeance against him, if he should ever fall into their power; and the occasion appeared to have arrived, for at least a chance of obtaining it. The air and attitude of 'Lije Orton led them to believe this.

All at once their mutual quarrels were forgiven, if not forgotten; and, with friendships fresh cemented by hostility to the common foe, they gathered around the old trapper and his companion—first earnestly listening to what these two had still to tell, and then as earnestly giving ear to the trapper's counsel about the course to be pursued.

There was no question of their remaining inactive. The name of the Yellow Chief had fired one and all, from Lead

to feet, rousing within them the bitterest spirit of vengeance. To a man they were ready for an expedition, that should catch either in fight or pursuit. They only hesitated to consider how they had best set about it.

"Do you think they might be still around the wagons?" asked Tom, addressing himself to Orton.

"Not likely," answered 'Lije; "an' for reezuns. Fust an' kindest, their war some o' you fellas, as passed the karryin' yesterday, 'bout the hour o' noon. Ain't that so?"

"Yes; we did," responded one of three trappers, who, standing silently in the circle, had not yet taken part in the Indian conversation. "We traveled along with them for sommance," continued the man, "and stayed a bit at their last halting-place. We didn't know any of the party, except their guide, who was that Choctaw that used to hang about Bent's Fort. Wabag, the Indians call him. Well; we warned them against the fellow, knowing him to be a queer 'un. Like enough it's him that has betrayed them."

"That's been the traitor," said 'Lije. "Him an' no other; tho' it moun't 'a' made much diff'rence. They war boun' to go under anyhow, wi' Yeiler Chief lookin' after 'em. An' now, as to the lookin' after him, we won't find him at the wagons. Knownin' ye've kin on hyar, an' knowin', as he's fonder ter do, that that's a good grist o' trappers at the fort, he'll stay 'bout the plundered camp no longer than'll take him an' his party to settle up spoalin' the plunder. Then they'll streak it. They've gied away from that long afore this."

"We can track them."

"No; ye can't. Leastwise, ef ye did, it woudn't be a bit o' use. This chile lev thort o' a shorter & better way o' findin' out that wharabouts."

"You know where they are gone, 'Lije?" interrogated Black Harris.

"Pappy nigh the spot, Harry. I reck'n I kin find it out, without much gropin'."

"Good for you, 'Lije! You guide us to that swarmin'-place, an' if we don't break up that wasp's nest an' strangle that yellow hornet o' a chief, then call Black Harris o' the Luckles a dud-r'ned greenhorn!"

"Ef I don't guide ye strait crustut into that campin'-place

ye may call ole 'Lije Orton blinder than the owls o' a purairia-dog town. So git your things ready, boys: an' kum right arter me!"

It was an invitation that needed no pressing. The hope of being revenged on the hated sub-chief of the Cheyennes—for deeds done either to themselves, their friends, or the comrades of their calling—beat high in every heart; and, in less than ten minutes' time, every trapper staying at St. Vrain's Fort, with a half-score other hangers-on of the establishment, was armed to the teeth, and on horseback!

In less than five minutes more, they were hastening across the prairie with 'Lije Orton at their head, in search of the Yellow Chief.

There were only five-and-twenty of them in all; but not one of their number who did not consider himself a match for at least three Indians!

As for Black Harris and several others of like kidney, they would not have hesitated a moment about encountering six each. More than once had these men engaged in such unequal encounters, coming out of them victorious and triumphant.

Twenty-five against fifty, or even a hundred, what signified it to them? It was but sport to these reckless men! They only wanted to be brought face to face with the enemy; and then let their long rifles tell the tale.

It was a tale to be told, before the going down of the sun.

## CHAPTER XI.

### CAPTORS AND CAPTIVES.

ONCE more in the gorge, where the young Cheyenne chief, and his band had encamped, before making attack upon the emigrant caravan.

It is the day succeeding that event, an hour before mid-day, with a bright sun shining down from a cloudless sky. The stage is the same, but somewhat changed the characters

who figure upon it, having received an addition of more than double the number. The Indians are there; but even they do not seem the same. From the quiet, earnest attitude of an expectant hawk, they have been transformed into a crowd of shouting savages.

Foxes before the quarry was run down, they are now ravening wolves.

Some are cowering, some laying down on the grass in a state of helpless inertness; while others, restrained by the authority of their chief, have kept sober, and stand guard over their new-made captives.

Only a dozen are needed for this duty. Three sentinels are distributed—two to each group: for the prisoners have been separated into three distinct parties—holding places apart from one another. The negroes, men, women and children, driven into a compact ring, occupy an angular space between two projections of the cliff. There, huddled together, they have no thought of attempting to escape.

To them their new condition of captivity is not so very different from that to which they have been all their lives accustomed; and beyond some apprehension of danger, they have but much to make them specially discontented. The Indian who stands beside them, with the butt of his long spear resting upon the turf, seems to know that his guard-duty is a sinecure.

So also the sentinel who keeps watch over the white women—five in all—with about three times as many children—boys and girls of various degrees of age.

There is one among them, to whom none of these bat can belong. She is old enough to be a wife; but the light, airy form and virgin grace proclaim her still inexperienced in matrimony, as in the case of maternity. It is Clara Blackadder.

Sad, I would say, though unlike them in most respects, she seems sad as any.

If she has no parents, and the children around her, she is old enough to be forty years—her father, whom her fond mother used to call "old," suddenly dying, died upon the prairie turf, a woman with gray hair, begrimed with blood, is still before her eyes.

It is his scalp that hangs from the point of a spear, stuck upright in the ground, not ten paces from where she sits!

There is yet another group equally easy to guard: for the individuals composing it are all securely tied, hand, neck, and foot.

There are six of them, and all white men. There had been nine in the emigrant party. Three are not among the prisoners; but besides the white scalp accounted for, two others, similarly placed on spears, tell the tale of the missing ones. They have shared the fate of the leader of the caravan, having been killed in the attack upon it.

Among the six who survive are Snively the overseer, and Elmont Blackadder, the former showing a gash across his cheek, evidently made by a spear-blade. At best it was but an ill-favored face, but this gives to it an expression truly horrible.

A top belonging to one of the wagons had been brought away—the wagons themselves having been set on fire, out of sheer wanton wickedness; such cumbersome things being of no value to the light cavalry of the Cheyennes.

The single tilt appears in the camping place, set up as a tent; and inside it the chief, somnolent after a sleepless night, and wearied with the work of the morning, is reclining in *siesta*.

Waboga, with the body-servant, keeps sentry outside of it. Not that they fear danger, or even intrusion; but both know there is a spectacle intended—some ceremony at which they will be wanted, and at any moment of time.

Neither can tell what it is to be—whether tragic or comic; though both surmise it is not likely to be the latter.

The white men are not so fast bound, as to hinder them from conversing. In a low tone, telling of fear, they discuss among themselves the probability of what is to be done with them.

That they will have to suffer punishment, is not the question; only what it is to be, and whether it is to be death. It may be even worse: death preceded by torture. But that of itself is sufficient to terrify them; and beyond this their conjectures do not extend.

"I don't think they'll kill us," said Snively. "As for

myself, they ought to be satisfied with what they've done already. They could only have wanted the planter--they've got all that, and what good can our lives be to them?"

"Our lives, not much," rejoins a disconsolate planter. "You forget our scalps! The Indians value them more than any thing else--especially the young braves, as these appear to be."

"There's reason in that, I know," answers the overseer. "But I've heard that scalps don't count, if taken from the heads of prisoners; and they've made us that."

"It won't make much difference to such as them," pursues the apprehensive planter. "Look at them! Three-fourths of them drunk, and likely at any minute to take the notion into their heads to scalp us, if only for a frolic! I feel frightened every time they turn their eyes this way."

Of the six men there are four more frightened, when the carousing savages turn their eyes in another direction--toward the group of white women. One of these is a widow, made so that same morning, her husband at the time lying scalped upon the prairie--his scalp of luxuriant black curls hanging before her face upon the bloody blade of a lance!

Three others have husbands among the men--the fourth a brother!

The men regarding them, and thinking of what may be their fate, relapse into silence, as if having suddenly lost speech. It is the speechlessness of despair.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### A NOVEL MODE OF PUNISHMENT.

The sun was already past the meridian when the young Cheyenne chief, coming out from under the wagon tilt, once more showed himself to his captives. Since last seen by them there was a change in his costume. It was no mere the scant broadcloth worn in war; but a gala dress, such as is usually seen on the occasion of their grand ceremon-

nies. His coat was the usual tunic-like skirt of the hunter, with fringed cape and skirt; but instead of brown buckskin, it was made of scarlet cloth, and elaborately adorned by bead embroidery. Underneath were fringed leggings, ending in moccasins, worked with the porcupine-quill. A Mexican scarf of crimson Chiru crape was around his waist, with its tasseled ends hanging behind. On his head was a checkered Madras kerchief, tied turban-fashion, its corners knotted on one side; while above the other rose a "parache" of bluish plumes, taken from the wings of the "gruya," or New Mexican crane, their tips dyed scarlet.

Stuck behind his sash was a glittering bowie-knife, that might once have been the property of a Kansas regulator; and there were also pistols upon his person, concealed under the white wolf-skin robe that still hung togelike from his shoulders. But for the emblematical painting on his face, freshly touched up, he might have appeared handsome. With this he was still picturesque, though terrible to look upon. His size—he was full six feet—gave him a commanding appearance; and his movements easy, and without agitation, told of a commanding mind. His followers seemed to acknowledge it; as, on the moment of his emerging from the tent, even the most roysterous of them became quiet over their cups!

For some minutes he remained by the open end of the tent, without speaking to any one, or even showing sign that he saw any one around him. He seemed occupied with some mental plan, or problem; the solution of which he had stepped forth to seek.

It was some way connected with the tiny waterfall, that fell like a spout from the cliff; for his eyes were upon it.

After gazing at it for some time, they turned suddenly up to the sun; and as if seeing in it something to stimulate him, his attitude became changed. All at once he appeared to arouse himself from a lethargy, like one who has discovered the necessity of speedily entering upon action.

"Waboga!" he called, addressing himself to the Choctaw.

The traitor was not one of the intoxicated, and soon stood before him.

"Take some of the young men. Cut down a tree—one

of the pines yester. Lop off the branches, and bring it here."

Waboga went about the work without saying a word; and a couple of timelaws were soon hacking at the tree.

It was but a slender one, of soft pine wood, and shortly fell. Then, lopped and toppled, its trunk was dragged up to the spot where the cliff stood, and where he had remained standing ever since issuing the order.

"It will do," he said, looking at the felled pison, as if satisfied of its being suitable for his purpose. "Now take it to the fall there, and set it up—behind the jet of the water, so that it just clears it. Sink a deep hole, and see you stake it firmly."

The hole was sunk; the tree set upright in it; and then firmly wedged and with stones. The tiny stream, coming down from the cliff, fell vertically in front, according to the directions given, just clearing its top.

By further instructions from the chief, a stout piece of timber, taken from one of the hulks, was fastened transversely to it, forming a cross, about five feet above the ground.

During all these preparations no one knew for what they were intended. Even the Indians employed could not tell, and Waboga was himself ignorant.

The captives were equally at a loss to make out what was meant; though they surmised it to be the preliminary to some mode of punishment intended for themselves.

When they saw the erection taking the form of a crucifix, this of itself was suggestive of torture; but observing also the strange spot in which it was being set up, there began to gather on their minds a shadowy thought of its kind. Silvius and one or two others—Blount Blackadder among them—in the upright post and its cross-piece, with the water-jet falling in front, were reminded of a mode of punishment they had themselves too often inflicted.

"I wonder what they can be after wantin' with that?" said one of the planters to his fellow-captives.

None of them made reply. The same thought was in the minds of all, and it was troubling them beyond the power of speech.

The interrogatory was answered in a different way. About

a dozen of the Indians, who had been called up around the chief, appeared to receive some directions from him. They were given in the Cheyenne tongue, and the captives could not make out what was said; though they could tell by the attitude and gestures of the chief Indians what related to themselves.

They were not long before discovering its object. Five or six of the young braves, after listening to the commands of their leader, turned their backs upon him, and came bounding on to the spot where the prisoners lay. They appeared in high glee, as if some sport was expected; while the hostile glance from their fierce eyes proclaimed it to be of a malignant kind—some ceremony of torture. And so was it.

It could scarce have been by accident that Blount Blackadder was the first victim selected. He was behind the others, and half crouching in concealment, when he was seized by two of the painted savages; who, jerking him suddenly to his feet, undid the fastenings around his ankles.

It was not to set him free: only to save them the trouble of carrying him to the spot where he was to afford them a spectacle. And it was of the kind at which he had himself often assisted—though only as a spectator.

His fellow-prisoners had no longer a doubt as to the torture intended for him; and in store for themselves. If they had, it was soon settled by their seeing him conducted toward to the spot where fell the tiny cataract, and forced under it—with his back toward the tree-trunk.

In a few seconds his ankles were bound around its base. Then his arms, set free, were pulled out to their full stretch, and fast lashed to the transverse bar, so that his attitude resembled that of one suffering crucifixion!

Something still remained to be done. A rawhide rope was passed around his throat and the tree-trunk behind, to which it was firmly attached. His head was still unsoothing by the water-jet, that fell down directly in front of his face.

But he was not to remain thus. As soon as his position seemed satisfactory to the Indian chief, who stood examining it with a critical eye, and, so far as could be judged through the paint, with a pleased expression upon his face, he called some words of direction to a young warrior who was near

It was obeyed by the Indian, who, picking up an oblong block of stone, stood holding it above the head of him who was bound to the cross.

"So, Blackfeet Blackfeet?" cried the Cheyenne chief, no longer speaking in the Indian tongue, but in plain, understandable English. "It's your turn now. Give him a double dose!"

As he spoke, the Indian, who held the stone, sagged it down between the back of Blackader's neck and the trunk of the tree. Wedged there, it brought his head into such a position that the stream of water fell vertically upon his crown!

The yell's profound by the Cheyenne chief produced a startling effect. Not so much upon him who was transfixed under the jet; though he heard them through the plashing water that fell sheeted over his ears.

For he well knew the purpose for which he had been so disciplined, as well as the pain to be endured; and he was already in a state of mind past the possibility of being further terrified.

It was not he, but others, who heard them with increased  
fright; this was known without him to be words of dread import.

She pressed her hand upon his ear; and so, too, Clara B. looked up with a strange, puzzled expression upon her countenance.

*Give him a double dose!*

What could it mean? Snively had heard the order before—remembered a day on which he was commanded to execute it.

And the words, too, came from the mouth of an Indian  
woman, plucked straight here than a thousand miles from  
the spot that bears them! Even among the blacks, huddled  
in the doorway of Ayerri, there were faces that ex-  
plained nothing but a healthy pallor of fear, as if from a  
**guicken conscience.**

"Gee, I am a d--d fool!" Gandy exclaimed one.  
"What's all this? What's all this?" It's jes' what Massa Blount  
say like yestiddy, when dey was gwine to pump on de head  
**of Blue Dick F-**

More than one of the negroes remembered the cruel com-

mand, and some also recalled how cruelly they had sneered at him on whom the punishment was inflicted. A speech so strangely recurring could not help giving them a presentiment that something was right at hand to make them repent of their heartlessness.

They, too, as well as Snively, looked toward the chief for an explanation, and anxiously listened for what he might next say.

For a time there was no other word to make the matter clearer! With his wolf-skin robe hanging from his shoulders, the chief stood contemplating the punishment he had decreed to his captive; a smile of exultation over-reading his face, as he thought of the pain his white victim was enduring.

It ended in a loud laugh, as he ordered the sufferer to be unloosed from his lashings, and dragged clear of the cross.

And the laugh broke forth again, as Blount Blackadder, half drowned, half dead from the aching pain in his skull, lay prostrate on the grass at his feet.

Then came from his lips an additional speech, the young planter might not have heard, but that smote upon the ears of the overseer with a meaning strangely intelligible.

*"It'll do for the present. Next time he offend's in like manner, he shall be pumped upon till his thick skull splits like a cedar rail!"*

## CHAPTER XIII.

### MAKING A BOLT.

At the new and still strange speech, Snively started up in, and Clara Blackadder looked up with a still more puzzled expression; while among the blacks there ran a murmur of interrogatories and exclamations of terror.

It was on the overseer, however, that the words produced the strongest impression. He was a man of too much intellect—or that 'cuteness that passes for it—to be any longer in doubt as to the situation in which he and his fellow-captives were placed. A clear memory, coupled with an accusing

conscience, helped him to an explanation, at the same time telling him of a danger far worse than being captives in the hands of hostile Indians. It was the danger of death, with torture for its陪隨. Death now appeared before his imagination, in the most hideous shape—an apprehension of moral pain added to the physical.

He gazed at his fastenings; examined them, to see if there was any chance of setting himself free. It was not the first time for him to make the examination; but never more earnestly than now.

The meanwhile the noose, wetted with the sweat of his body—in places with his blood—showed signs of stretching. By a desperate wrench he might get his limbs clear of it!

What if he should succeed in untying himself?

His misery could only last for a moment—to be followed by a renewal of his captivity, or by a sudden death.

Neither could be worse than the fate that now seemed to be awaiting him, and fear! Even death would be preferable to the agony of apprehension he was enduring!

One more glance at his fastenings, and along with it the determination to set himself free from them.

And, without reflecting further, he commenced a struggle, in which all his strength and cunning were concentrated.

The noose however yielded to the superhuman effort; and, casting this off of their coils, he sprung out from among his fellow-prisoners; and went off at full speed toward the prairie!

He did not continue far in the direction of the outward plain. With no other hope of getting clear, than that bold outlet mere swiftness of foot, he would not have made the attempt. Were the Indians' horses standing near, ready to be mounted at a moment's notice, the Indian would have been simply exposed. Even had he had more than half-score strides, several of the savages were soon rushing toward their steeds to take up the pursuit, for the prairie Indians never think of following a foe upon foot.

If he had driven on for the open plain, the chase would have been a short one. He had determined on a different course. While lying on the ground, and speculating on the chances of getting away, he had noticed a ravine that ran

sloping up toward the summit of the cliff. Trees grew thickly in it. They were dwarf cedars, bushy and umbrageous. If he could only get among them, screened by their foliage, he might succeed in baffling his pursuers. At all events, their arrows and bullets would be aimed with less likelihood of hitting him.

Once on the mountain slope above, which was also forest-clad, he would have at least a chance for his life.

He was a man of great strength, swift too of foot, and he knew it. It was his knowledge of the possession of these powers that gave him hope, and determined him on the attempt he had made.

It was not so unfeasible, and might have succeeded, had his only pursuers been they who had taken to their horses.

But there was one who followed him on foot, of equal strength, and swifter of foot than he. This was the Cayenne chief. The latter had noticed the prisoner as he gave the last wrench to the ropes, and saw that he had succeeded in setting himself free from their coils. At the same instant that Snively sprung out from among his fellow-prisoners, the chief was upon the bound after him, with his long spear poised and ready for a thrust. He had thrown off his wolf-skin cloak to obtain freedom of movement for his arms.

Snively, as he had intended, turned abruptly to one side, and struck up the ravine, with the chief close following him. Those who had taken to their horses were for the time thrown out of the chase.

In a few seconds, both fugitive and pursuer had entered the gorge, and were lost to view under the spreading boughs of the cedars.

For a time those remaining below could not see them; but by the crackling of the parted branches, and the rattle of stones displaced by their feet, it could be told that both were still struggling up the steep.

Then came loud words, proclaiming that the pursuer had overtaken the pursued.

"A step farther, you accursed nigger-driver! one step farther, and I'll run my lance-blade right up through your body! Down again! or I'll split you from hip to shoulder."

Although they saw it not from below, a strange, tragical

tableau was presented at the moment when these words were spoken.

It was the chief who had uttered the threat. He was standing up on a ledge with his spear pointed vertically upward. Above him, hanging from a still higher ledge, with one hand grasping the edge of the rock, was the long, lathy form of the Mississippian overseer, outlined in all its ungainly proportions against the facade of the cliff!

He had been endeavoring to climb higher; but not succeeding, was now overtaken, and at the mercy of his savage purgiver.

"Down!" repeated the latter, in a voice that thundered along the cliffs. "Why do you want to run away? You see I don't intend to kill you? If I did, how easily I might do it now. Down I say!"

For a moment Snively seemed to hesitate. A desperate effort might still carry him beyond the reach of the threatening spear. Could he be quick enough?

No. The eye of his enemy was too watchful. He felt, that on failing to make another attempt, he would have the iron spike, already red with his own blood, thrust through his body.

Another thought came into his mind. Should he drop down, grapple with the savage, and endeavor to wrest the weapon from his hands? He now knew whose hands held it.

It was a dubious enterprise but for a moment. Ere he could commence upon its execution, half a dozen of the Indians, armed close followed their chief, came rushing up to the ledge, and stood on the ledge beside him.

They were holding him, with their saifit foot-hold against the rock. So his spear was detached from the rock; and he could not let it loose; wherefore he was at once seized, and tied more securely than ever.

"Down and down!" commanded the Cheyenne chief, speaking his followers. And then addressing himself to the overseer, he said: "When we get below, Mr. Snively, I'll explain to you why you're not already a dead man. I don't wish that; I want to have you alive for awhile. I've a show for you, as well as the others—especially those

belonging to old Blackadder's plantation; but above all for yourself, its worthy overseer. Bring him below!"

The recaptured captive, dragged back down the ravine, though with fearful apprehensions as to what was in store for him, had no longer any doubt as to the identity of him with whom he had to deal.

When the Cheyenne chief strode up to the waterfall; washed the paint from his face; and then, turning toward the other captives, showed them the bright yellow skin of a mulatto, he was not taken by surprise.

But there was profound astonishment on the countenances of the negro captives; who, on recognizing the freshly-washed face, cried out as with one voice:

"*Blue Dick!*"

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE RESCUERS.

While the savage scenes described were being enacted in the mountain valley, a band of horsemen was fast approaching it, making their way around the skirting spurs that at intervals protruded into the prairie.

It is scarce necessary to say that these were the trappers from St. Vrain's, nor to add that they were riding at top-speed—fast as the horses and mules on which they were mounted could carry them.

Conspicuous in the front were two who appeared to act in the double capacity of leaders and guides. One of them seemed exceedingly anxious to press forward—more than any of the party. He was acting as if some strong urgency was upon him. It was the young Irishman, O'Neil. The man riding by his side, also seemingly troubled about time, was his old comrade, Lige Orton, the trapper.

The two kept habitually ahead, now in muttered converse with one another, and now shouting back to their companions, to urge them onward. Some of these came close up, while some, at times, showed a disposition to straggle.

The truth is, the "mountain men" had brought their whisky-drugs along with them, and, at every stream crossed, they made an stoppage to "take a dram."

O'Neil sat silent, and, as he did not speak the day. To him it was excruciating torture.

"After all," said O'Neil, with the intention less to restrain than comfort him, "it won't make so much difference, Ned. A wheen o' men's ain't neyther byur nor thur, in a matter o' the kind. In course, I know well o' what ye're thinkin' about."

He paused, as if expecting a rejoinder.

O'Neil only answered with a deep, long-drawn sigh.

"Ef any thing air to happen to the gurl," continued 'Lije, rather in the strain of a Job's comforter, "it will hav' happened long 'fore this."

The young Irishman interrupted him with a groan.

"Maybe, hows mdever," continued 'Lije, "she air all right yet. It air possible enuf the Injuns'll get drunk, as soon as they lay their claws on the hicker that must 'a' been in the waggin'; and if that be the case, they won't think o' troublin' any o' that lepries till their curousin' kums to a end. This chit's every mts., & they intend any torturin', they'll keep that spot over till the morrow; an' shu'd they do so, darn me, ef we don't disappoint 'em. Once we git upon the spot, we'll give 'em sp'it very diff'runt from that they'll be expectin'."

There was reason in what 'Lije said. His words were contrary to O'Neil; and, for a time, he rode on with a countenance more cheerful.

It soon became clearled again, as he returned to reflect on the character of the Indians, who were supposed to have "stolen" the caravan; more especially their chief, whose fame as a leader of white men was almost equaled by his rapacity as a leader of white women. There was more than one story current among the trappers, in which the Yellow Cliff Indian is represented among white-skinned gillish captives, who had fallen into his hands on their passage across the prairie.

With the remembrance of these tales coming fresh before his mind, O'Neil groaned again.

What if Clara Blackadder—in his memory still an angel—but if she should, at that moment, be struggling in the arms of a painted devil! I saw her? Beauty in the embrace of a fiend! The reflection was fearful—odious; and, as it shadowed the young hunter's heart, he drove the spurs deep into the flank of his horse, and cried to his comrade, "Come on, Lige! come on!"

But the time had arrived when something besides haste was required of them. They were nearing the spot where the pillagers of the caravan were supposed to have made camp; and the trappers were too well acquainted with the wiles of prairie life to approach either men or animals in an open manner. They knew that no Indians, even in their hours of carousal, would leave their camp unguarded. A whole tribe never gets drunk together. Enough of them always stay sober to act as sentinels and videttes.

Safe as the Cheyenne chief and his fellow-plunderers might deem themselves—far away from any foe likely to molest them—they would, for all this, be sure to keep pickets around their camping-place, or scouts in its vicinity.

There was a bright daylight, for it was yet early in the afternoon. To attempt approaching the bivouac of the savages across the open plain, or even close skirting the mountains, could only lead to a failure of their enterprise. They would be sure of being seen, and, before they could get within striking distance, the Indians, if not disposed to fight, would be off, carrying along with them both their booty and their captives. Mounted on fresher horses than those ridden by the trappers, now panting and sweating after a long, continuous gallop, they could easily accomplish this.

There seemed but one way of approaching the Indian camp—by stealth; and this could only be done by waiting for the night and its darkness.

As this plan appeared to be the best, most of the trappers were in favor of adopting it. They could think of no other.

The thought of such long delay was agony to O'Neil. Was there no alternative?

The question was put to his comrade, "Lige, while the discussion was in progress,

"Thur air a alternative," was the answer addressed to all, though no one who so welcomed it as his young friend.

"What other way?" demanded several voices, O'Neil's being the first heard.

"You see them mountings?" said 'Lije, pointing to a range that had just opened to their view.

"Sartin; we ain't all blind," replied one of the men. "What about them?"

"You see that hill that sticks out thur, wi' the trees on top o't, just like the hump o' a butler bull?"

"Well, what o' it?"

"Close by the bottom o' that, them Injuns air camped—that be, ef this chile hasn't made a mistake 'bout thar intentions. We'll find 'em thur, I reck'n."

"But how are we to approach the place without their spying us? There ain't a bit o' cover on the prairie for miles round."

"But there are kiver on the mounting itself," rejoined 'Lije. "Plenty o' tree kiver, as ye kin see."

"Ah! you mean for us to make a circumlocutus over the ridge, and attack 'em from the back-side. Is that it, 'Lije?"

"That's it," icontinually answered the old trapper.

"You must be mistaken about that, Orton," put in Black Harris, supposed to be the sagest among "mountain men." "We might get over the ridge 'ithout bein' noticed, I reckon; but not with our animals. Neyther hoss nor mule can climb up yonder. And if we leave them behind, it'll take longer than to wait for the night. Besides, we mightn't find any kiver up among the rocks. They look, from here, as if they had been piled up by giants as had been playing jack-stones wi' 'em."

"So they do, Harry," replied 'Lije, "so do they. But, f'r sakes, there's a even kin thar a path to crawl throu th em, an' that's 'Lije Orton. I hasn't trapped all round by it without knowin' the nar cuts; an' there's a way over that ridge as'll fetch us strait easurat to the Injun campin'-ground, an' without their purposin' our approach in the least o' sailin'. Beside, it'll bring us into such a position that we'll leev the skunks 'ithin' reach o' our guns,

fore they know any thin' 'bout our bein' near 'em. Beside, too, it'll save time. We kin get thur long afore dark, so as to have a good chance o' lookin' through the sights o' our rifles."

"Let us go that way," simultaneously cried several voices, the most earnest among them being that of O'Neil.

No one dissenting, the mountain path was determined upon.

Continuing along the plain for a half-mile further, the trap-pers dismounted, *cached* their animals among the rocks, and commenced ascending the steep slope--Lige still acting as their guide.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### RETALIATION IN KIND.

The thrill that passed through the captives as Blue Dick discovered to them his identity was not so startling to all. With Blount Blackadder and Snavely, his words, as well as his acts, had long since led to his recognition. Also among the slaves were some who remembered that scene in the courtyard of the old home plantation, when he had been subjected to the punishment of the pump. Despite their supposed obtuseness, they were sharp enough to connect it with the very similar spectacle now before their eyes; and, on hearing the command, "Give him a double dose," more than one remembered having heard the words before. Those who did were not happy, for they also recalled their own conduct on that occasion, and were apprehensive of just retribution from the hands of him whom they had sold. Seeing how their young master had been served, they became sure of it; still more when the overseer, Snavely, was submitted to the same cruel chastisement, and after him, the little negro who had walked the pump-handle when Blue Dick was being doused.

Both these received the double dose, and more than double. As Snavely was unloosed from the cross, and dragged out

beyonl the water jet, the hideous gash along his cheek looked still more hideous from its blanching.

And the negro, thick as was his skull, roared aloud, and felt as though his head had been laid open. He said so often nothing but scowls. The pain upon his face was no longer that of pain, as when he himself was administering the punishment. It was a contortion that told of soul-suffeting agony.

He was not the last to be so served. Others were taken from the crowd of slaves, not indiscriminately, but evidently selected among them. And the rest began to see this and to know why they were to be tortured. Some were solaced by the thought that to others gave keen apprehension. They did not at first feel their fellow-slave, when he was himself suffering. Only they自己 were stricken with fear.

And now I had they to carry; for, one after another, as the chief pulled them out, they were seized by his satellites, dragged down among their trembling fellow-captives, and in turn driven to the pine-tree cross. And there were they kept, till the cold naked snow from Pike's Peak, descending on their craniums, caused them to shrik out in agony.

All this while the Cañon was looking on; not gravely, as though in Indian character, but looking like the spectre of a dead man, hovering, hovering over the ground like bats, and pecking until the rocks gave back the sound of their own silent inward, melancholy chime.

Never had such a sight been seen in such a storm the like of which had ever before taken place, who, by brave deeds, had won so far up over them. Never before had he treated them to such a sight, or so full to their savage natures, and such a scene of carnage, as that of the Indian defeat.

The sun went up to set behind that distant, when the crisis of the Cañon battle was to have its record with the white men. And, as it set, the sky, the young filibustering sun, and the earth, all apparently turned from acts of hostility.

The Yerkes C. could stand upright among them, coming forward, who had planned the base of their fit—the brigadier general of their "Confederacy,"—who surprised all of us in his fidelity of the white race, and more than once had led them in a like murderous march against them

hereditary enemies, was the man after their heart, the type of a patriotic savage.

Now, more than ever, had he secured their esteem; now, as they saw him, with cruel, unsparring hand, deal out chastigation to their pale-faced captives; a punishment so quaintly original, and so terribly painful, that they would not have believed in it, but for the cries of keen agony uttered by those who had to endure it.

To Cheyenne ears they were sounds so sweet and welcome, as to awake the intoxicated from their alcoholic slumbers, and call them up to become spectators in the spectacle. Drunk and sober alike danced over the ground, as if they had been so many demons exhibiting their saltatory skill upon the skull-paved floors of Acheron.

Nor was their laughter restrained when they saw that the punishment, hitherto confined to their male captives, was about to be extended to the women. On the contrary, it has increased their fiendish glee. It would be a variety in the performance—a new sensation—to see how the latter should stand it.

And they did see; for several of the female slaves—some of them still young, others almost octogenarian "twinkies"—were ruthlessly led up to the stake, to that baptismal bath of water painful as fire itself!

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE WHITE WOMEN.

FOR more than two hours was the fiendish spectacle kept up—a tragedy of many acts; though, as yet, none of them ending in death. —

But neither actors nor spectators knew how soon this might be the termination of it. —

So horrified were the captives, they could not even reflect; though, from the looks of genuine alarm on all their faces, it seemed as if every captive knew.

The discrimination shown in their punishment led some to entertain a hope. All, both blacks and whites, now knew what would they have to deal; for, in a whispered conversation among themselves, the story of Blue Dick was told to one of the English party who had never heard of him before.

And the slaves who were not of the Blackadder plantation, as also the white men to whom these belonged, began to indulge in the belief that they were not to be made victims to the vengeance of the mulatto.

They were allowed time enough to reflect; for, after some ten or a dozen of the female slaves had been *douched*, to the delight of the young Creyances, and the apparent satisfaction of their chief, there was an interlude in the atrocious performance. The renegade, as if contented with revenge—at least, for the time—had turned away from the waterfall, and gone inside his tent.

Among the three captive groups, there was none in which there could be more keen than that composed of the female slaves. They had to fear for something dearer to them than life—their honor.

Several of them were young, and more than one good-looking. Not to know it they could not have been women.

Up to that hour the savages had not insulted them. But this gave them no assurance. They knew that these loved women of a certain class; and the whisky taken from the dead Indians had doubtless diverted the savages from intruding upon them.

They had no guarantee, for they had been told of some such conduct. The character of cold incontinence given to the *white*—and figures in the early history of their country—had been an application to the fiery Creyances. And they had ever heard of these savages' fondness for women; and the white women, most of whom, in thinking of longer to their husbands, were also apprehensive about their own.

Sophia, the wife of Clark Blackadder, suffered more than any of them. She had seen her father's corpse lying upon the ground, drenched in its own blood. She had just turned to see her brother subjected to a punishment

she now knew to be fearfully painful; and she was reflecting what might be in store for herself.

She remembered Blue Dick well. As his master's daughter--his young mistress--she had never been unkind to her. But she had never been specially kind; for some of Blue Dick, exerted by the slave Sylvie, had rather turned her against him. Not to actual hostility; only to the showing of disfavor. The truth was, that the heart of the planter's daughter had been so occupied with its own affairs--its love for the young stranger O'Neil--it had little room for any other thought.

The same thought was still there; not dead, but surrounded by a woe-begone despair, that, even now, hindered her from feeling, keenly as she otherwise might have done, the danger of the situation.

Still she was not insensible to it. The Cheyenne chief in passing, had glared angrily upon her, with an expression she remembered more than once to have seen in the eyes of Blue Dick. As Sylvie's mistress, as the friend and confidant of the quadroon slave, more than all, as the sister of Blount Blackaller, she could not expect either grace or mercy from the mulatto. She knew not what she might expect. It was painful to think, still more to converse, upon it with the women around her.

These did not talk or think of her fate. It was sorrow enough for them to reflect upon their own. But she had more to dread than any of them, and she knew it. With that quick instinct peculiar to women, she knew she was the conspicuous figure in the group.

As the horror of the situation came palpably before her mind, she trembled. Strong as she was, and self-willed as through life she had been, she could not help having the keenest apprehensions.

By alone with her trembling came a determination to escape, even with Sylvie's example and failure before her face!

She might be overtaken. No matter. It could not increase the misery of her situation. It could not add to its danger. At the worst, it could only end in death; and death she would accept sooner than degradation.

She was but slightly tied. In this the Indians do not

much pains with their women captives. It is not often these make any effort to get free, and when they do, it costs but little trouble to track and recapture them.

Still, we have been instances on the prairies where brave, bold women—even delicate ladies—have contrived to escape from such captivity, and in a manner almost miraculous. The early history of the West teems with such episodes; and she, a child of the West, had heard them as part of her nursery lore. It was this remembrance that was partly inspiring her to make the attempt.

She did not communicate the decision to her fellow-captives. They could not aid, but only obstruct her. Under the circumstances, it would be no selfishness to forsake them.

One night she made a wild, hopeless chance. And so, too, woulds, the fear that had stolen into her mind. It had been suggested by the sight of an animal standing near. It was her own horse, that had been appropriated by one of the Indians. He was standing with the saddle on, and the bridle resting over the crutch. A riding gear new to them, like, in the fancy of the Indians, and they had left it on for exhibition.

Carefully she knew her horse to be a fleet one.

"On, on his back," thought she, "I might gallop out of their reach."

She had a thought, though. She might get upon the trace way of the wagons had followed from Bent's Fort. She believed she could remember, and return along it.

An instant after this, she stopped. At the fort she had seen many wagons. They might be induced to come back with her, and bring up the old man, her brother.

And so, she sat and deliberated in a few short moments, determined to go. She slipped off the horse, and went to the camp, lay down, and covered her head, and prepared for a start.

Now was the time, while the chief was inside his tent,

## CHAPTER XVII.

## A FLIGHT URGED BY DESPAIR.

"Now or never!" was the reflection that passed through Clara Blackadder's mind; and she was in the act of springing up from her recumbent position, when a circumstance occurred seeming to say, "never!"

The mulatto had stepped out from the canvas screen, and stood in front of it; no longer robed in the costume of an Indian chief, but wearing the same dress he had worn as a slave on the Mississippi plantation. It was the same as on that morning when she had been a spectator of his punishment. He was the Blue Dick of bygone days, only taller and stouter. But the coarse jeans coat and cotton trousers, of copperas stripe, had been ample enough to be outgrown.

"You'll know me better now, my old masters and fellow-slaves," he shouted out, adding a decisive laugh. "And you, too, my young mistress," he continued, turning toward the group of white women, and approaching it in a triumphant stride. "Ha, Miss Clara Blackadder! You little thought, when one fine day you stood in the porch of your father's fine house, looking calmly on while I was in torture, that, some other fine day, your turn would come for being tortured too. *It has come!* The rich and the young have been the other, have had a taste—only a taste of what's in store for them. I've kept you to the last, because you are the last. That's always the case in cases of necessity. Ha! ha! ha!"

The young lady made no reply. In the faint, dazed expression on her, she saw there was no hope left to her, and that well's water would be thrown away. She only crawled crawling before him.

But even at that moment she still held her place. And she still contemplated springing up, and running toward her horse.

Abs! it seemed impossible. He stood right in the way, and could have caught her before she had taken three steps.

And he did catch her before she had made one--even before she had attempted to stand erect.

"Come!" cried he, roughly clasping her waist, and jerking her to her feet. "Come with me. You've been a hussy on Long Island. It's your turn now to afford sport for others."

And, without waiting for a reply, he commenced dragging her in the direction of the waterfall.

Susan did not scream, nor cry out. She knew it would be idle.

But there was a cry sent forth from the other side of the glen--a sharp scold, which evidently that it caused the mulatto to stop suddenly, and look in the direction whence it came.

Rising out from among the crowd of negro captives, was one who might have been the oldest of them--a woman of near seventy years of age, and that weird aspect common to old slaves of the plantation. With hollow cheeks, and white wrinkled skin over her temples, with long, shrivelled fingers, protruding beyond the scant rag of garment which the slaves had permitted to remain upon their shoulders, stood old Mrs. African Heade, sedately exorcised for the occasion.

In this commanding aspect, hers was not an errand of destruction, but mercy.

"I afeared of dyin' miss!" she cried, pressing forward. "You let go hold of her, Bow Dick. You take a feller hand! If you do, you a fiel--a murderer. You all was dan dat. You be a-murderin' ob your own fresh an' brud!"

"What do you mean, you old fool?" cried the mulatto, at the same time surmising, by his looks, that her words had surprised him.

"What do I mean? She mean what she lib j 3 say. Dat you gonna to Miss Anna, you harm you own sum!"

The mulatto shuddered as if he had received a stroke.

"What you ever think! You're gettling, Nan. You're old, and have lost your senses."

"Nan! Nan! Nan! I don't lose none o' her sense, nor her memory either. She 'most a-doin' you on her back, when you a-wal be pleasin' my, not bigger dan a 'possum,

She nuss Miss Clara too 'bout de same time. She know who boaf come from. You boaf child'en ob de same fader—ob Mass' Blackadder; an' she you sisra. Ole Nan tell you so. She willin' sw'ar it."

For a time Blue Dick seemed stunned by the startling revelation. And equally so she, whose wrist he still held in an angry grasp. It was a tale strange and new to both of them.

But the asperations of the old negress had in them the earnestness of truth; more so at such a moment. And along with this were some glimmers of light, derived from an indefinite source—instincts or dreams—perhaps some whisperings over the cradle—that served to confirm her statement.

Revolting as was the thought of such a relationship to the delicate sensibilities of the young lady, she did not attempt to deny it. Perhaps it might be the means of saving her brother and herself; and, for the first time, she turned her eyes toward the face of Blue Dick in a glance of appeal.

It fell in sudden disappointment. There was no mercy there—no look of a brother! On the contrary, the countenance of the madato—always marked by a harsh, sinister expression—seemed now more merciless than ever. His eyes were absolutely dancing with a demoniac triumph.

"Sister!" he cried, at length, sarcastically, hissing the word through his teeth. "A sweet sister! she who all my early life has been but my tyrant mistress! What if we are from the same father? Our mothers were different, and I am the son of my mother. A dear father, indeed, who taught me but to toil for him! And that an affectionate brother!"—here he pointed to Bount, who, restored to his fastenings, lay stretched on the grass—"who only delighted in torturing me; who ruined my love—my life! Sweet sister, indeed! you, who treated me as a menial and slave! Now shall you be mine! You shall sweep out my tent, wait upon my Indian wife, work for her, slave for her, as I have done for you. Come on, Miss Clara Blackadder!"

Freshly grasping the young lady's wrist, he recommenced dragging her across the camp-ground.

An involuntary murmur of disapprobation rose from the different groups of captives. During their long, toilsome journey across the plains, Clara Blackadder had won the good

wishes of all—not only by her grace and beauty, but for many kindnesses shown to her traveling companions, black as well as white. And when they now saw her in the clutch of the unmerciful monster, being led, as they supposed, to the untold torture some of them had already experienced, one and all uttered execrations against it. They were not certain that she was not to be saved, but by the special intercession; they only guessed it by the direction in which he was conducting her.

Whatever might have been his purpose, it was prevented.

With a spring as it of the energies of youth had been restored to her succulent frame, the old nurse rushed upon him; and, catching his throat in her long, bony fingers, caused him to let go his hold.

He turned upon her like an enraged tiger, and, after a short struggle, driving with a blow from his strong arm, old Nan fell flat upon the earth.

But as he sought with the girl to renew his grasp, he saw she was no longer within his reach! While he was struggling with the negroess, she had darted away from his side; and, springing upon the back of her own horse, was urging the animal in full gallop out of the gorge!

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE STALKERS ASTONISHED.

MAKING their way up the steep mountain-path, climbing over talus and rocks, disturbed by thicket and scree, the Indians advanced close to the cliff which, as Little Otter well knew, had been the camp-place of the Cheyennes.

The path was narrow and commuted with crags and jagged ledges. There was a dead-like silence in the path through air, and they knew that the slightest sound might have known their approach to the enemy.

They had drawn themselves into a deployed line, after the

manner of skirmishers, crouching silently among the stunted pines, and gliding rapidly forward where the ground was without cover. Orton was directing them by signs; O'Neil stepping close by his side, and not enough for the slightest whisper to be heard between them.

The young Irishman still kept impatiently urging the advance. Every moment of delay seemed a moth to the heart of the lover. Over and over again came before his mind that hideous picture his fancy had painted—Cata-Bachelder strumming in the embrace of a savage! And that day—the **Yellow Chief of the Cheyennes!**

The Indians were like the waves of a tempestuous sea, following one another at intervals. As each rose grimly before him, he came near groaning aloud. He was only restrained by knowing the necessity for silence. As a relief, he kept constantly whispering to his old comrade, and urging him to a more rapid advance.

"Dad rot it, Ned!" replied the latter; "don't be so hurried 'bout it. We'll git ther in good time, take this cull's went for it. There's plenty o' lever in the emigrant wagons, I guess. Them Mississippi places don't often go travelin' 'thout a good lot o' corn. An' as for the Indians, they ain't tryin' to trouble themselves bout women as long's the lever lasts. Don't you be uneasy; we'll git up there and protect the gal an' Cata-bachelder skunks as havent' a hand, you see if we don't."

"But why go crooking this way? Once upon the cliff we must deliberate ourselves. We can't get down along back, as you say; and since it must all be done with our rifles, the first shot will discover us."

"So it will; discover us to a certainty. But ther's just the point. That first shot must be delivered by all of us at the same instant o' time. Unless we make a beller o' them, if the French trappers call it, they'd be off in the shadow o' a god's tail, perhaps takin' their picnics along with 'em. And what'll we be to follow 'em? Tumtur, we must fix that so's every one may take sight on a different Indian at the same time; an' then, afore they kin git clear out o' the gully, we'll be loaded for a second shot. I guess they'll make 'em think o' somethin' else than thinkin' off their capives. Keep

y'er patience, y'ur fellar! Trust to ole 'Lije Orton, when he sez y'ur gal air still sde an' soon!"

The Texan's lover, despite his anxiety, could not help seeing confidence in the words thus whispered. More than once had he seen 'Lije Orton acting under circumstances of a like性质, and as often coming out triumphant. With an effort he restrained his impatience, and imitated the cautious approach of his comrade.

They were soon sufficiently near the edge of the cliff, to hear a murmur of voices rising up out of the valley. As the ears of all were well attuned to such sounds, they knew them to be the voices of Indians. And these could be no other than Yellow Cliff, and his band of marauders.

A hush was made; and a hushed council held, about the best mode of making attack.

"There must be n'er a noise among ye," whispered 'Lije, "not the speakin' o' a word, till we've got one fire at 'em. Then come y'er rid's agin, quick's ever you kin. Two sets o' shots ought toin 'em, so they won't mind 'bout thar captives, nor anythin' else, 'ceptin' to streak it—that air, sech as be left o' 'em."

This counsel was delivered in a whisper, and in the same way passed along the line.

"Only one set o' ye fire at a time," continued 'Lije. "You fellows on the left shoot first. Let the others reserve for the second volley. Twon't do to waste two bullets on the redskins. Leave Yellow Cliff to me. I hev got a ole score to settle wi' that Injun."

With these precautions, communicated from left to right, the trappers advanced—no longer as skirmishers, but as one, and as near to one another as the inequality of the ground would permit.

They could now hear the voice of a man, who talked slowly and in a tone of authority. They could even make out some of the words, for they were in English!

This gave them a surprise; but they had scarce time to wonder, when they heard a chorus of cries, uttered in general confusion, and told of some unusual occurrence. Among these were the screams of women.

At the same instant the trampling of hoofs resounded along

the rocks, as if a horse was going off at a gallop over the hard turf of the prairie. Then succeeded another chorus of yells—a confused din—and soon after the pattering of many hoofs, as of a whole troop of horses following the first.

The sound, reaching the ears of the trappers, carried their eyes out toward the plain: where they beheld a sight, that caused one and all of them with throbings of the heart. Upon the prairie, just clearing the scarp'd edge of the cliff, was a woman on horseback. At a glance they could tell it was a young girl; but as her back was toward them, they could see neither face nor features. She was in a lady's saddle; and urging her horse onward as if riding for life—her skirt and hair streaming loosely behind her.

There was one among them that knew who she was. The quick instinct of love told Edward O'Neill well the fugitive upon horseback was Clara Blackfeather. His instincts were aided by remembrance. That magnificent head of hair, black as the plumage of a raven, was well remembered by him. It had often been before his fancy in the lone bivouac—at night entwining itself with his dreams.

"Oh, heavens!" he exclaimed, "it is Clara herself!"

"Y'er right, Ned," responded 'Lije, gazing intently after her. "Darned ef it ain't her, that very girl! She's a-tryin' to git away from 'em. See! thar goes the bul o' the Injuns arter her, gallopin' like h---"

As O'Brien spoke, the pursuers began to appear, one after another passing outside the cliff-line—urging their horses onward with blows and loud vociferations.

Several of the trappers raised their rifles to the level, and seemed calculating the distance.

"For y'r lives, don't shoot!" cautioned 'Lije, speaking in a constrained voice, and making himself understood by a wave of the hand. "It kin do ne'er a good now, but only spile all. Let 'em go off. Ef the girl gits clur, we'll soon track her up. Ef she don't they're born' to bring her back, an' then we kin settle wi' 'em. I reck'n they're not all arter her. There's some o' the skunks still below. Let's jest see to 'em; an' then we kin lay out our plans for them's hav' t'd out in the purshot." 'Lije's counsel was unanimously accepted, and the gun-barrels brought down again.

"Lie down, Harry," he said to himself, "while some o' us used to run and roll about. Harry, since you kin' long w' me."

His purpose was only to satisfy Black Harris, who instantly volunteered to accompany the old trapper—his senior in years, and his equal in reckoning the "mountain men."

"Now, boys!" he cried, "Lie on laying tree, 'ne close as I've told you, and under a word out o' one o' ye till we git back."

Sitting, head forward, Black Harris by his side—the two young fellows had knees, and with as much caution as if they had been upon their hind legs, like a herd of antelopes.

The gaze of the others did not follow them. All eyes were turned downward to the prairie; watching the pursuit, now far off and still going farther across the open plain.

But no one watched with such anxiety as O'Neill. It ached like his wife's soul, like some pent-up agony. His very breathing was a spasm, as he crouched behind the dwarfed cottonwood, calculating the distance between pursuers and pursued. How he regretted having left his horse behind him. What would he not have given at that moment to be on the back of his steed, and galloping to the rescue of his beloved?

Perhaps his suffering would have been still more acute, but for the fact just spoken by his old comrade. The girl would either return or be brought back; and either way, there was hope of saving her. With this thought to console him, he took up the rest of the pursuit with more equanimity. Sinking low upon his knees, he awaited the result of the reconnoissance.

Carefully and carefully along, O'Brien and Harris crept until near the edge of the cliff, and looked down into the valley below. A general alarm caused them to comprehend the situation. No signs as they had conjectured. The white-tailed prairie-dogs were scattered groups, gobbled by some eagles, scattered over the Indian Field, and these rock-hopping over the ground half intoxicated.

"They'll never come down to us," said O'Brien, "and we must surprise 'em. And when we do kill 'em shout in a noise."

"We'll do it," said O'Brien, and he added, "What they

stand? We can rub out every red-skin of 'em at a single volley?"

"Sartin we could; but don't ye see, old boss, that 'ud never do. Ye forget the gurl; an' she ate the only one o' the halibut with savin', I reckin; the only one I'd give a darn to waste powder for. Ef we war to fire a shot, the purshoers out yonner 'ud be sartin to hear it, and then good-by to the gurl—that is, if they git their claws on her ag'in."

"I see what you mean; an' you're right. We must bag this lot below, without makin' a rumpus; then we can set our traps for the others."

"Jess so, Harry."

"How are we to do it, think ye, 'Lije? We'll have to go back to whar we left our horses, and ride round by the open end of the valley. That way we'll have them shut up like sheep in a pen."

"No, Harry: we hain't time to go back for the animals. Afore we ked git roun' thar, the purshoers mout catch the gurl and be comin' back. Then it 'ud be no go. I bethinkas me o' a better way."

Black Harris waited to hear what it was.

"I know a pass," continued 'Lije, "by the which we may git down wi' a leetle stretchin' o' the arms. If we kin only reach bottom afore they see us, we'll make short work o' 'em. But we must be cunnin' 'beout it. Ef but one o' the skunks hev the chance to escape, the gurl 'll be lost sure. That ain't a second o' time to be wasted. Let's back to the boys, an' at oncest down inter the gully.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### SETTING A STRANGE SCENE.

RETREATING from the edge of the cliff with the same caution they had approached it, the two mountain-men joined their companions in and 'stir. 'Lije, after making known his idea, laid his hand on the pocket of his coat, and a moment or

ravine, the same up which Saively had made his vain attempt at escaping.

Surrounded by the scrub-o-lars, the trapper party succeeded in crossing it, without being perceived either by the Indians or the captives over whom these were keeping but careless watch.

The sudden appearance upon the plain was a surprise to both to the latter a joyful shout; to the former a terrible apprehension; they saw in it the quick harbinger of death.

No sound was heard by the assailants. On the moment of their first reaching the plain, they flung aside their guns; and drawing bows and knives, went at the Indian sentinels, in hurried but silent slaughter.

There was groaning, struggling, and shouts; but the attacking party outmanned those attacked; and in less than ten minutes did the shouting cease—since there was not a living soul upon the ground to continue it. Instead was the green and yellow earth strewed with dead bodies, every one of them showing a bronze-colored skin, horribly enameled with glistening points of crimson blood!

The captives were in raptures of joy. They saw that their deliverance was complete. The whites, both men and women, sprang to their feet, and struggled with their fastenings—wishing to have their arms free in order to embrace their deliverers; while the negroes, none of whom were bound, came running from out of the enclosure, where they had been left to groan and weep, uttering frenzied shouts.

"Keep yur ground and stop yur damed shoutin'!" cried "Lip," with a gesture waving them back. "Don't one o' ye stir out o' yur places. Back, back, I say! Stay as ye wur, till we git yez loose. An' you diser," he continued, running to the other side and checking the forward movement of the negroes, "turn er down just as ye did afore. We b'leef'd it's all this is my business yet. There's another scene o' it to kum."

The negroes and whites were a little surprised, at being thus recalled from the full fruition of their joy. But the stern silence of the old trapper, sustained as it was by the gestures of his companions, had its effect upon them; and all at once covered back into their original position. What was

the intention they could not guess; but, released from the agony of fear, they were willing to wait for it with patience.

They soon beheld a spectacle, so strange as almost to restore them to terrified thought. They saw the dead bodies of the Indians raised from their recumbent position; set up beside their long spears, that had been previously planted in the ground; and lashed to these in such a manner as to sustain them in an erect attitude. They were distributed here and there over the swank, most of them close to the captives, as if still keeping guard over them! Those not so disposed of were dragged off and hidden away behind the large boulders of rock that lay at the base of the cliff.

"Now!" thundered the old trapper, addressing his speech to the captives, white as well as black, "if one o' ye stir from the spot ye're in, or venture to show sign o' any thin' that's tak place, till ye git the word from me, ye'll hev a rifle bullet sent plum through ye. The gurl hez got to be rescued without harm done to her; an' I reck'n she's worth more than the bell o' ye the other. That's but one way o' savin' her, an' that's by yur keepin' yur heads shut up, an' yur hands off without stirrin' as much as a finger. So don't make ne'er a movement, ef ye value yur precious lives. Ye understand me?"

The captives were too much controll'd to make rejoinder; but they saw, by the earnestness of the old trapper, that his commands were to be obeyed, and silently resolved to obey them.

After delivering the speech, Lije turned toward his trapper companions—all of whom knew what was meant, and who, without waiting word or sign, rushed toward their rifles—still lying on the ground.

In a few seconds they had regained them; and, in less than five minutes after, not a trapper was to be seen about the place. They had disappeared as suddenly as sprites in a pantomime; and the little valley seemed suddenly restored to the state in which it had been left, when the parties of Clark Blackadder swept out of it. Any one glancing into it at that moment could have had no other thought, than that it contained the captives of an emigrant train, with their Indian captors keeping guard over them.

## CHAPTER XX.

## A RIDE FOR MORE THAN LIFE.

NERVED by the fear of a terrible fate, did the escaping captive now ride his swift horse, exhorting the animal both with words and caresses.

He knew not where, and did his best. He seemed to know, also, why he was thus put to the top of his speed; for under such circumstances the horse seems to be stirred by something more than instinct.

The excellent boy Clark Mackalder was a hunter, of the best kind, indeed, and might have distanced any of the mustangs mounted by the Indians.

But there was another of the same race among his pursuers—such a rider as she, strength and swiftness even to himself. It was the boy that had belonged to the younger lady's brother, and reportedly Pine Dark, and now following with the maddato upon his back.

She could now win. She only knew that one of the pursuers had overtaken her, and saw that the rest had fallen far behind. But, to her mind, she saw that this single horseman was gradually gaining upon her.

Her heart was not man and arm'd, as might have riled up a Indian warrior. But she knew that the weakest of the Indians would be more than a match for her, and if overtaken, she must succumb.

She could only rely in the swiftness of her horse, and in the skill of her mount, of course, in getting him to run with such rapidity, while striking the heel of her tiny boot against his sides.

The boy, according to his urgency, did his best; but he could not, in his own view, as we see that of the rider, depended upon his speed.

It was a long ride. In the flooring girl had made another noise, so that, however, the close clattering of hoofs gave warning that the pursuer was rapidly drawing near; and

giving a glance back, she saw him, within less than a hundred lengths from the heels of her own horse.

She saw, besides, what rendered her fears yet more agonizing, that it was no Indian who was thus hotly pursuing her, but a man in a cotton shirt—he who was once a slave on her father's plantation. It was the Yellow Chief divested of his Indian habiliments, whom now, from what she had heard, she must believe to be her brother.

An Indian so cruel—so unnatural! She trembled at the thought of the encounter!

It could not be avoided. In ten minutes more he was riding by her side.

Catching the bridle-rein of her horse, he drew the animal down upon its hatches—at once putting an end to the pursuit.

"No, no, Miss Clarey," he tauntingly cried out, "you shan't escape me so easily. You and I don't part company till you've served me and mine as I've served you and yours. It makes no matter if I *am* your brother, as old Nan says. You've got to come back with me, and see how you'll like being a slave. We keep slaves among the Indians just as you proud planters of Mississippi. Come along with me, and see!"

The young lady offered no resistance; nor did she say a word in reply. From what she had already seen and experienced, she knew it would be idle; and, resigning the rein, she permitted her horse to be controlled by him who had so easily overtaken her.

Turning about upon the prairie, captor and captive commenced retracing their tracks—the former sitting erect in his saddle, exultant of success; the latter with bent attitude, and eyes regarding the ground in a look of despair.

The Indians soon came up with the rider; and the captive was conducted back toward the scene where she had suffered so much suffering.

And what was to be her fate? She could not tell. She did not even think of it. Her mind was crushed beyond the power of reflection.

The chase had occupied about half an hour. It took over twice the time for the Indians to team. The sun had already sunk low over the ridge of the Rocky Mountains, and it was

twilight within the little valley. But as they advanced, there was light enough for them to distinguish the other captives still lying on the grass, and their comrades keeping guard over them.

So long as the Yellow Chief, as, on reaching the crest of the ridge that ran transversely across the entrance, he glanced up the slope, and saw the different groups to all appearance as he had left them.

Riding in the front, he was about to descend the slope, when an exclamation from the rear caused him to rein up and look back.

Several of the Indians, who had also mounted the ridge, were snatched up to its summit, as if something was causing them surprise or alarm.

It could not be any thing seen in the encampment. Their faces were turned to that direction, but along the mountain line to the northward.

The chief, suddenly wheeling about, trotted back to the summit; and there, as wild was his cursing surprise to his followers, did White Horse, exulted himself. Making out from the direction, and scattering over the prairie, was a troop of horses without riders. In such a place they might have passed fifteen miles, with one miles among them, for they saw no trace. But they were near enough not to be mistaken for *mustangs*.

Presently it was seen that they all carried saddles on their backs, and these over their necks—the reins of most of them trailing down to the grass.

The Indian riders knew at a glance what it meant. It could be no less than the cattle of some camp that had "stampeded."

An encampment of whites, or men of their own color? This was the question, for a while, occupied their attention, as they observed the movements of the animals. It did not take them long to arrive at a conclusion. The steeds, at first scattered in different directions, had now all taken the same order; and in a drove were now coming toward the spot occupied by the Indians. As they drew near, the style of the saddles and other riding gear told the Comanches that they were not Indians.

On first seeing them, the Yellow Chief had commanded his followers to take position behind a clump of trees standing upon the slope of the ridge, and hindering observation from the northward. There, for a time, they continued to observe the movements of the riderless horses.

What seemed strange was, that there were no men following them. It escaping from a camp in broad daylight, as it still was, they should have been seen, and some attempt made to recapture them. But as they strayed under the eyes of the Indians, no owners appeared to be after them.

For some time the Cheyenne chief and his followers sat gazing upon the cavallada, and endeavoring to explain its presence.

They could make nothing out of it, beyond the fact of its being a troop of stampeded animals.

And these could only have come from a camp of whites; for neither the horses nor their trappings were such as are in use among Indians. There were American horses among them, very different from the mustang of the prairies.

Had they got away in the night, when their owners were asleep? Not likely. Even thus they would have been traced and overtaken. Besides, when the Indians first set eyes on them, they were galloping excitedly, as if freshly stampeded. They were now getting quieted after their scare—whatever it may have been—some of them, as they stepped along, stooping their heads to gather a mouthful of grass.

To the Indians it was a tempting sight. Horse-stealing is their regular profession, and success at it one of their basal accomplishments. A young brave returning to his tribe with the captured horse of an enemy, is received almost with as much triumph and congratulation as if he carried the scalp of that enemy on the point of his spear.

They remained in ambush only long enough to see that there were no men in sight of the straying horses; and to reflect, that even if the owners were near, they must be absent, and therefore helpless to hinder their cattle from being captured. A dozen after the drove would do it. They were all provided with their lassos, and there could be little difficulty in securing the strays, to all appearance docile, as if jaded after a long journey. With the quickness of lightning these

thoughts passed through the minds of the marauders; and suddenly they turned their eyes upon the chief, as if he had given them a signal in pursuit. Not only was it easy to discern his intent, but to read the chase.

As he rode forward, his bow was ready; and, by Indian law, belonged to him who takes it. The Geronimo, who had two arrows fastened to his stock, was however unprepared; and turning to one of the men who kept guard over his captive, he ordered him to take her on to the encampment.

Then, setting the example to his followers, he rode out from behind the crest, and, at an easy pace, directed his course toward the surrounding cañons.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### A PLEASANTER CAPTIVITY.

If the sight of the straying horses had caused surprise to the Indians, how less so would it have been to them who, within the Valley, were awaiting their approach. The trappers, placed in a position to observe the pass, had seen Yellow Chief as he ascended to the crest of the ridge, and noticed his strange movements. In all the other parts, they were stationed near the crest, and observed the number of their number on each side of the pass. They had taken station on the crests into the form of the ridge, and they shielded with scrubbed aspens the approach of each camp. Their plan was to let the Indians pass unmolested, and then, making bold, to seize the camp, and thus cut off their retreat. This was to be done before the day was over, as well as to provide when the sun rose, a sufficient quantity of gunpowder to lay the fortifications in ruins. The day had not yet given up its scorching rays when the Indians had reached the ridge. In the minds of these savages, there was no room for a Indian enemy has little power; less still for a Comanche; and less still for the bairn of

braves led by the Yellow Chief—a name lately distinguished for treacherous hostility toward trappers, as well as cruelty of every kind.

"Let's kill every red-skin of them!" was the resolution understood by all, and spoken by several, as they separated to take their places in ambuscade. When they saw the Indians mount upon the summit of the ridge, the chief audaciously descending, they felt as if their design was soon to be accomplished. They were near enough to the savages to make out the expression upon their countenances. They saw no signs denoting doubt. In five minutes more the unconscious party would be through the gap, and then—

And then was it, that the exclamation was heard from those upon the hill, causing the chief suddenly to turn his horse and ride back.

What could it mean? Not one of the trappers could guess. Even Lige Orton was puzzled by the movement.

"There must be something queer on the other side," he whispered to O'Neil, who was in ambush by his side. "That 'ere movement can't a be from any thing they've see'd up yon. They won't lookin' this way. Darn me, if I kin make out what's stopped 'em!"

Of all those awaiting the approach of the Indians no one suffered so much from seeing them halt, as the young Indianman. For the first time in five years he had a view of her face, almost every night appearing to him in his dreams. She was near enough for him to trace the lineaments of those features, indelibly impressed upon his memory. If he saw change in them, it was only that they appeared more beautiful than ever. The wan line of sadness and the palor of complexion, natural to a daughter of the South, had been repaid by a red suffusion upon her cheeks, caused by the chase, the capture, and the terrible excitement of the situation; and she seemed to grow with beauty. And there was something that at the moment rendered her still more beautiful in the eyes of O'Neil. During the interval of hasty action since entering the Indian encampment, he had found time to place himself in communication with some of the white captives, her companions on the journey. From them he learned enough to know, that Clara Blackfeather was yet unweeded. Some

thing, too, of her mood of habitual melancholy, as if there was a void in her heart, none of them understood!

As he went behind the cedar-trees, expectant of her return, he half indulged in sweet conjectures as to its cause; and when he saw her up on the ridge, riding down as it were into his arms, a tumult of delighted anticipation passed over him. The cedars were to train him off from rushing into the timber; and it was with difficulty the old trapper could restrain his impulsive exclamation.

"She's come back now as the Indians hatched on the hill."

"They may get her again," said he, in an agitated whisper, "but we must prevent it now. Suppose they suspect us?—What? They may get her off, and take her along with them? We have no names to follow. We should never overtake them afoot."

"You'll catch 'em, Ned, I can tell you now. They're aye out for a day or two. If they git a glamp' o' one o' us, they'll be soon to stampede. Don't show the tip o' y'er nose, Ned; for y'ur life, don't!"

The cedar林 had not yet been reached. O'Neil was in an agony of impotent impatience. It seemed so easy to rush up to the summit of the ridge, and rescue her he so dearly loved. But it was like trying to run the swiftest horse, through a narrow lane filled with savages that surrounded her!

You might suppose, by the expression of his face, considered passion, he would have made the several attempts had he not been stayed by the remonstrance of the Indians, who, to the surprise of all, the traps and snares, were seen to turn toward the ridge. The Indians, leaving the young girl in the care of the old woman, even then O'Neil found it difficult to restrain his impatience from his amazement at the suddenness of their arrival. It seemed now so easy to rescue her!

The old woman was now compelled to turn back, following the Indians, who had turned him and the place.

"Aha! I thought you was the man I wanted though not very comely," said the old woman, as she entered O'Neil's car. "Hey, you! Come along with me into O'Neil's car. I'll give you a squirrel from the branch o' a tree. His fur has a barred squirrel from the branch o' a tree. His fur

The last exclamation was simultaneous with a movement on the part of the Indian who had been left in charge of the captive. In oblivion to the hurried order of his chief, the savage had taken the bridle of her horse, and commenced leading the animal down the slope in the direction of the ravine, his eyes straying over the ground of the encampment.

Before entering the gap, he looked ahead! The silence there seemed somewhat to astonish him. It was strange there was no movement. He could see several of his comrades lying upon the grass and others standing over the captives, those still in their places just as he remembered them, when starting forth on the pursuit.

The Indians upon the ground seemed natural enough. They were those who had drunk too freely of the white man's fire-water. But the guards standing erect--bearing upon their long lances--it was odd they should be so silent, so motionless! He knew his comrades to be trained to a certain stoicism; but, considering the exciting scenes that had occurred, this was beyond expectation.

For all, the thought caused him no suspicion. How could he have a tincture of what had transpired in his absence?

He advanced without further pause, leading the captive's horse, till he had passed through the gap of the gorge. Whether he then saw enough to tell him of the trap into which he had fallen can never be known. If he did, he had no time either to reflect upon, or escape from it. A man, going silently out from the bushes, sprung like a panther upon the crewp of his horse, and before he could turn to see who thus assailed him, a bowie-knife had gone deep into his dorsal ribs, causing him to drop dead to the ground without uttering a groan!

It was the bowie-knife of old 'Lige' Orton that had inflicted the fatal stab.

At the same instant another man, riding out from the same cover, dispossessed the captive girl in his arms, and then duly lifted her from the saddle.

She was surprised, but not terrified. There could be no more terror there. If there had, it would have passed in a moment, when in her deliverer she recognized one who, for five long years, had been alike the torture and solace of her thoughts.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## THE SCENE RE-ARRANGED.

EDWARD O'NEIL held Clara Blackadder in his arms. He now knew she loved, and had been true to him, though not from any words that passed between them.

There was scarcely time for them to do more than pronounce one another's names; but the glance exchanged was eloquent to the hearts of both. Each saw in the other's eyes, that the differences which still there, strengthened, if aught changed, by the time intervening when they had passed

A few moments later all of their coming together they were again past by the traps; who, with 'Lige' Orton and Billie Hark, met them, and hastily commenced rearranging the animals. Every moment they might expect the return of the Indians. A scout, who had hurried up to the end of the ridge, reported back why they had ridden off.

With the quiet satisfaction common to men of their calling, they rode off again. They remembered that in their hurry, they had not slightly scoured their horses. Something, some sort of wild beast, perhaps a grizzly bear, had got among them, during the stampede. It was an occurrence not new to them.

In many instances their thirst for vengeance against the de-  
voted Clayhounds had driven more than ever determined  
men to seek out the predatory land.

"Let's run 'em down, every teleskin o' them!" was the  
counsel passed around.

"What's the good o' that, anyhow?"

"Well, we'll kill 'em, and their horses too, to re-  
deem us from trouble. But, boys! it won't do to go  
foolish about it. Though that's no fear o' these hyur skunks  
till they're dead, we know the place, same for all that. This  
lodge won't provide for us like the rest o' em. When that  
fire's out we'll be rid yon spiltin' your tempestian."

The others knew what 'Lige meant, and hastened to reset the stage for the next scene of the sanguinary drama.

While the scout on the crest of the ridge kept them warned as to the movements of the Indians, the others were busy placing the tablet on that was to greet them on their return. The young lady was directed to assume a half recumbent attitude on the grass—her horse still saddled standing near. Close by was the dead body of the savage to whose keeping she had been intrusted; not seeming dead, but propped life-like by the side of his own horse, as if still keeping guard over the captive. All was arranged in less than ten minutes of time. These rude mountain men are ready at such crises. No wonder their wits should be quick and keen; their lives often depend upon the successful execution of similar schemes.

When every thing was fixed to their satisfaction, the trappers returned to their ambush; as before, distributing themselves into two parties—one for each side of the gorge. A sentry was still kept upon the top of the ridge, that he might be the man first depicted for the punishment of this camp. There were now two of them—Buck Harris and 'Lige O'Neil.

It was an interval of silent reflection while the young Irishman O'Neil, Before his eyes—and most within reach of his arms—upon the gray sward, to see lying that fair form which he had so long absent years had remained vividly outlined in his memory. How he longed to go nearer, and embrace her! And all the more that he perceived her gaze turned toward the spot where he lay concealed, as if endeavoring to penetrate the leafy screen that separated them. How he longed for the final event, that would terminate this wild tragedy, and bring them to other scenes, in life never more to be parted! It was a relief, as well as joy to him, when his old comrade, O'Neil, close followed by Buck Harris, was seen hastily descending the slope, tear gestures showing that the hunting was over, and the savages were taking back to their encampment.

"Now, boys?" said 'Lige, taking to both sides of the gorge, and calling out the people in a excited tone, "if you jist keep yet this perfectly cool for about ten minutes longer, and we'll ye git the word from Buck Harry

"By myself, you'll have a chance o' wipin' out any scores ye may have run up against yours iv's an' Yellow Chief. Don't be afraid of you, I'll take till the last of the cursed varmints has gone before I pass the mouth o' this here gully. An' then, they'll hear the signal from me. It'll be the crack of my rifle. After that, the Indians ain't likely to key any Gert; and you kin go in, an' get 'em eternal salvation."

In less than a minute had ceased speaking; not a trapper was to be seen near the Indian encampment; only the captives, with their sentinel standing over them, surrounded by a circle as of death. It was like the ominous calm that comes between the gusts of a storm, all the more awful from the contrasting silence.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE STAMPEDERS CAPTURED.

In scattering hordes, and the straying *caravans*, the Cheyennes did not off at once. The spectacle of over twenty horses scattered about, wandering about without riders or drivers, or the signal of an owner following after them, was enough to call forth wide-spread astonishment to the surrounding tribes, and their Justices of creation. And still, it was the object of many, with the design of drawing them into traps. Partly for this reason, and partly because the Indians could not be scared into a second attack, and partly because of the want of capture, the Cheyennes had been compelled to hold back.

At length, however, and in white men apparelled, the Indians came out, and after a hasty look around, and a hasty consultation upon the scattering horses, and the want of drivers, as the white men's horses were all dead, or broken, or dead, and snorting now and then, and now and then barking.

First, and in front, was a slow and confused movement of the herd, — a sort of first-star tournament, in which horses, all driven by lucky riders, and others without any, were

tangled together and galloping toward every point of the camp; long, slender ropes, like snakes, suddenly uncoiled, were seen circling through the air; wild cries were heard, sent forth from a score of savage throats—the clamor increased by the shrill neighing of horses and the shriller hennying of the mules—while the firm prairie turf echoed the tread of over a hundred hoofs.

And soon this tableau underwent a change. The dark, moving mass became scattered over a wider surface, and here and there could be seen, at intervals apart, the oft-described spectacle of a horseman using the lasso: two horses at opposite ends of a long rope stretched taut between them, tails toward each other, one of them standing with feet firmly planted, the lasso fast to a stapled ring in the tree of his saddle; the other prostrate upon the ground, with the rope wound around his neck, no longer struggling to free himself, but convulsively to get breath.

And soon again the tableau became changed. The captured steeds were whipped back upon their feet, and their captors once more got into a clump together, each leading a bare horse, that followed without further resistance.

Some had none; while others, more fortunate or skillful, had succeeded in making a double take during the quick scramble.

After the more serious work of the morning, it was a light and pleasant interlude for the young Cheyennes, and as they hurried toward their camp, they were full of joyous glee.

Sad were their thoughts damped with some suspicion of danger. The novelty of such an easy razzie, had in it also something of mystery; and as they rode slowly back over the prairie, they cast anxious glances toward the north—the point from which the stampede horses had come.

But no one was in sight—there was no sign of a human being!

Were the owners of the lost horses asleep? Or had they been struck dead, before the scattering commenced?

The natural congratulations of the savages, on the hand-to-hand coup they had made, were restrained by the mystery that surrounded it; and, with mingled feelings of gladness

and apprehension, they came in reapproached the spot, where, as they supposed, their countrymen and captives awaited them.

They were met by the report that all horses would have been taken. This was a heavy blow to Wau-wau's camp, for it was the last hope. Where there was smoke there was still to be fire; and thinking of this old adage, he knew that since there were over twenty caparisoned horses there must be at least this number of men not far off—men who could only be Indians. Now that the animals were in his possession, the size of their owners being white. The horses, saddle, and other trappings were such as are never, or very seldomly seen by the red-skinned cavaliers of the prairie.

To get up the outfit taken from the emigrant train, along with the captives, and take speedy departure from the place, was now his design.

He was well aware of the triumph that awaited him on his return to the headquarters of the great Cayenne tribe; of the reward he would receive for having taken such a booty—of the slaves he would have, those left to be distributed as slaves; of the chief he would play in the nation, his promotion among the Indians, and the day to become head-chief of the Cayennes; and so many thoughts passing through his mind made him highly exultant.

And here comes the other thought—revenge over his enemies in every way—over the wrongs of many and persecution he had suffered, and to avenge that also, and along with it honor, and the right of the white man.

He had no thought of joy, thus revelling in revenge; and so he rode back to the camp, where he knew his wife was waiting, though it had been hard mattering to himself:

"They shall see me, and I have served them. And she is a good woman—I shall be my wife!"

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## FINALE.

THE sun was already close down to the summit of the *sierra*, when the Yellow Chief and his followers once more surmounted the ridge that brought them in sight of the campment. Although the daylight was still lingering around them, the little glen and the gap leading into it were obscured under the purple shadows of approaching night.

There was light enough left for the Indians however to discover the salient features of the scene. They could see the various groupings of their prisoners, with their comrades standing sentry over them; the white men on one side; the women near; and on the opposite edge of the valley, the savage crowd, some seated, some standing—in all respects, apparently, as they had parted from them when starting on the pursuit of Clara Blackadder.

Apart from all the rest they saw her, with the Choctaw keeping watch close by, his hand clutching the withers of his horse.

The picture was complete. Nothing seemed wanting. No one was there who should not have been; nor any one missing. Who could have had suspicion, that close to those silent groupings there were others equally silent, but unseen and unsuspected? Not the young Caciquee braves returning with their captured horses; not the daring chief at their head.

Without the slightest warning of the surprise that awaited them, they passed through the gap, and on the level meadow took up the spot occupied by the prisoners.

It was not until they had drawn up amidst the captive groups that others seemed a little strange to them. Why were their comrades so still, so silent? They did not think of the sleeping stretched along the grass—in all about a dozen. They had left them there, and knew that they were intoxicated. But the guards standing erect—why were these so unimpressive? It was a thing unusual. Returning with such spoil, they might expect to have been hailed by a pean of congratulations. There was not even a salute!

It was a puzzle—a mystery. Had there been a better light, it might sooner have been solved. The blood sprinkled here and there over the grass; the gashes that would have been visible on the bodies of the sentinels; their stiff, set attitudes and ghastly faces—all would have been apparent. But over all was the vail of a fast-darkening twilight, and through its obscurity only the outlines of their figures could be traced, in positions and attitudes seeming natural enough. It was the absence of all motion coupled with the profound silence that seemed strange, ominous, appalling!

"Waboga!" cried the chief, addressing himself to the Choctaw who stood guard over the girl. "What means this? Why do you stand there like a stump? Why do you not speak?"

No answer from Waboga!

"Dog!" cried the mulatto, "if you don't make answer, I'll have you nailed to that cross you have yourself erected. Once more I ask you: what is the meaning of this nonsense?"

The threat had no effect upon Waboga. It elicited no answer—not even the courtesy of a sign!

"Slave!" shouted the chief, leaping from his horse, and rushing toward the silent sentry, "I shall not give you the grace of a trial. This instant shall you die!"

As he spoke a blade glistened in his hand, which, as his gestures showed, was about to be buried in the body of Waboga.

The sentry stood staunch, apparently regardless of the death that threatened him!

The chief stayed his hand, surprised at the unparalleled coolness of the Choctaw.

Only for a moment: for as he stood regarding him, now close up to the body, he saw what explained all—a gash great as he could have himself inflicted!

Waboga was already dead!

The horse upon which the Choctaw was leaning, scared by the threatening gesture, shied to one side, and the lifeless form fell heavily to the earth!

The knife dropped from the hands of the Cheyenne chief and, with a wild, abstracted air, he turned toward his followers, to seek an explanation.

But before a word could be spoken all was explained.

A cordon of dark forms was seen closing up the entrance

of the valley ; the word "Fire!" was heard, followed by a serried sheet of flame, and the sharp "crack, crack, crack," proclaiming the discharge of a score of rifles.

It was the last sight seen by the Yellow Chief—the last sound heard by him before passing into eternity !

And the same with his freebooting band. Not one of them went alive out of that valley, into which the trappers had decoyed them !

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The emigrants continued on to California, now with diminished numbers ; for along with the leader, several others had been killed in the attack upon the caravan.

But, besides the dead, there was one living who went not with them. Now that her father was no more, there was no one to hinder Clara Blackadder from staying behind, along with the man of her choice ; no reason why she should not return with him to the seats of civilization.

And she did so ; not to share with him an humble home, but a residence far more splendid than the old plantation house in the "Choctaw Purchase." As the Irish trapper had declared it, Edward O'Neil was one of the "Onales of Tipperary, a gentleman on both sides av the house" ; and in due time the property belonging to both sides of the house became his.

It might be chivalry, that he did not take his young Southern wife there, where she might feel lonely in a land of strangers. But it gave equal evidence of good sense that he sold off his Tipperary estates, and invested the money in the purchase of town-lots upon an islet he had learned to love, even more than the "gem of the seas." It was the isle of Manhattan.

There he still lives, happy in the companionship of his beautiful and faithful wife ; cheered by sweet children, and, at intervals, by the presence of his old comrade, Lije Orton ; who, now that railroads have penetrated the far prairies, comes occasionally to pay him a visit, and keep posted up in the lore of the "Mountain men."

THE END.

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